



AGE OF ANTIQUITY



ADVENTURE AND INTRIGUE
IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

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AND A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR BACKERS
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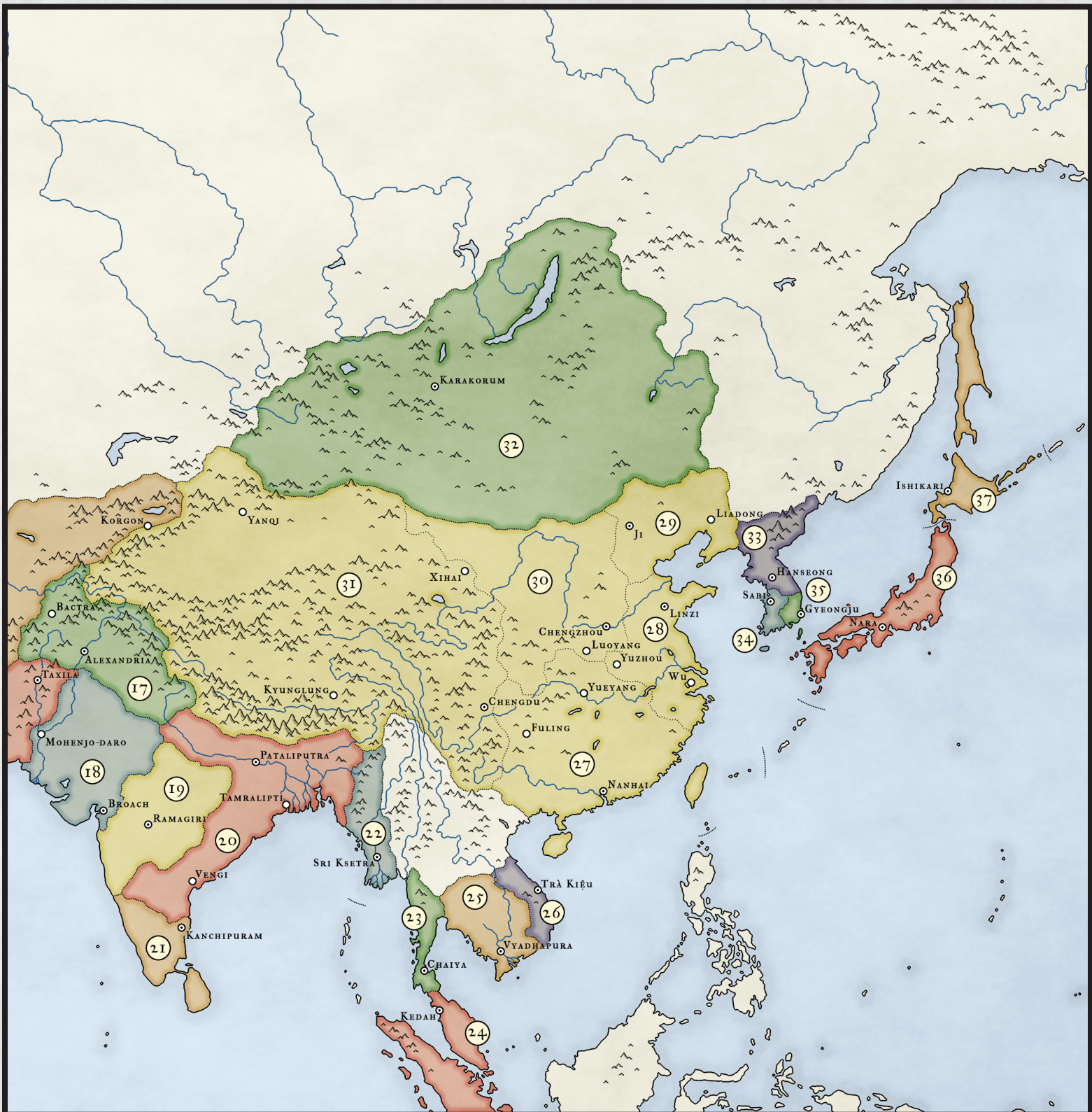
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Mundus Noster

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Welcome to the Age of Antiquity



Age of Antiquity is a historical-fantasy setting guide for 5E.

This book is designed to help players and GMs take themselves and their characters back in time to the height of the ancient world.

Within these pages, you will find eight detailed cultures along with maps and key dramatic personae. In addition, the world map gives the borders and key cities for dozens of additional cultures and civilizations which the players and GM may explore.

Though based heavily on real history, this book is an amalgamation of the time periods 250 BC – 250 AD, and is not meant to perfectly reflect any specific year in real history. In addition, certain borders are greatly exaggerated, either larger or smaller, than the historic states (or lack thereof) may actually have been.

Beyond the cultures, you will find a large list of detailed deities from across the ancient world. In Age of Antiquity, the gods are very real and actively take part in the affairs of mortals. Though the nature and amount of influence they exert over the mortals varies greatly between pantheons and deities.

Players will also find myriad new character options to help them feel like they truly belong in the ancient world. With two dozen backgrounds and subclasses, and over one hundred and fifty magical items, players will find no shortage of choice available to them.

Near the end, you will find a small section detailing multiple mythological creatures and adversaries taken from across the historical world. These will help GMs create encounters that feel setting specific.

Finally, we would like to give a special thanks to all those who supported us, both in the initial Kickstarter and with your orders and words of support since. Thank you for helping us bring Age of Antiquity to life!

CHAPTER 1

CULTURES





The Celtic Rebellion

Capital

Venta Icenorum (22,000)

Major Settlements

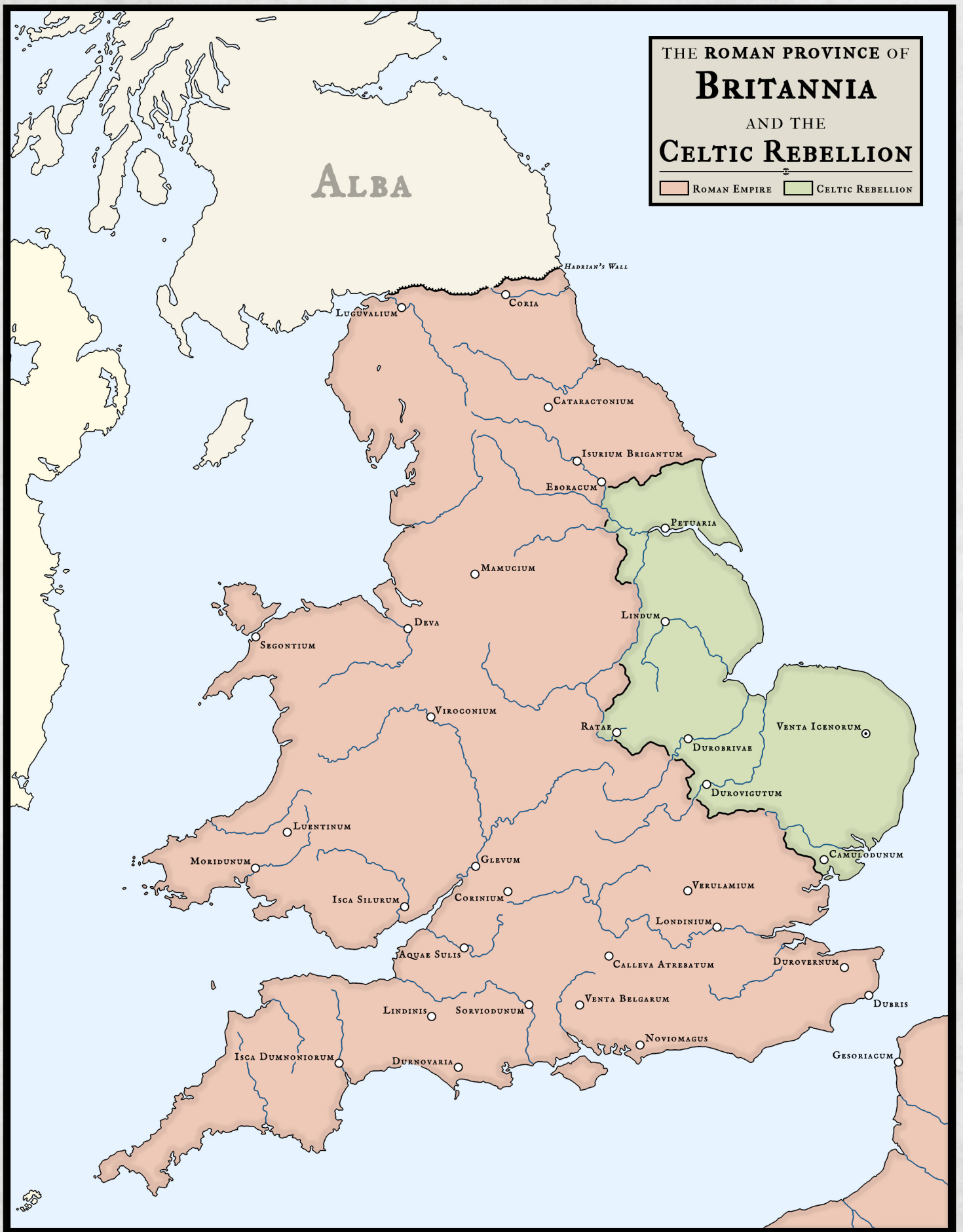
Petuaria (12,000)

Leader

Queen Boudica

THE ROMAN PROVINCE OF
BRITANNIA
AND THE
CELTIC REBELLION

ROMAN EMPIRE CELTIC REBELLION



First People

Though records are murky, it is widely accepted that the first people to settle The Isles were the Cessair, led by their queen of the same name. Exiles from far off lands, the Cessair faced immediate crisis as their population had less than a dozen surviving men. In short order, accidents and warfare against the Isle's Fomorians — monstrous creatures that attacked from beneath the land and sea — reduced the Cessair to a single man, Fintan. Unable to cope with the heavy burden of repopulation, Fintan fled with the Cessair women in quick pursuit. Cornered outside the cave that is now known as Fintan's Grave, he beseeched the spirits of nature to assist in his escape. Answering his call, the spirits of the forest saw Fintan shed his mortal form and transform into a mighty eagle. Just as the Cessair closed in around him, Fintan took to the skies, never to return to his people. Though incredibly long lived, the Cessair women began to dwindle over the next century until only Queen Cessair herself remained. Her final fate is unknown and some claim she still hunts Fintan across the world with the hopes of eventually rebuilding their people.

For three centuries the Isles would remain uninhabited by man, left to the Fomorians until the arrival of the Muintir Partholóin, the Second People.



Boc Rawlen

The Fomorians

The Fomorians are a species of monstrous folk who have inhabited The Isles since long before humans set foot upon their shores. They are typically bestial in appearance, with the heads of goats and bulls and often tower over humans in size.

The Fomori have always been few in number and lack any major settlements. They primarily subsist off of hunting and gathering, though they have also long been known to raise ducks. Some Fomori live beneath the waves and often raid fishing villages, subsisting entirely off of what they catch at sea. These Sea Fomori often have the features of these creatures. Fish-like heads, webbed hands and feet, tentacles, and crustacean-like claws are all common.

On occasion a Fomori does appear that would be considered beautiful by human standards. These rare few often serve as liaisons, speaking before humans on behalf of the Fomori should it come to that.

The First Fomorian War

The Muintir Partholón, led by the wizard king Partholón, would establish the first urban settlements across The Isles. Unlike the more nomadic Cessair, the Muintir brought with them the basic tenets of agriculture, fishing, animal husbandry, and metallurgy. Many of the original Muintir settlements are still inhabited to this day by the Milesians, the Sixth People.

The Fomorians viewed these settlements as blights upon The Isles and made regular raids against them. Led by the six-armed giant Cichol Gricenchos the Fomorians intended to see the Muintir wiped from The Isles just as they had the Cessair three centuries earlier.

This war would last nearly a decade and saw dozens of Muintir settlements razed and their inhabitants slain. But even as they gained ground, the Fomorians, never high in number, found their population stretched thin. King Gricenchos decided to mass his forces for one final push on the Muintir capital settlement. This push culminated in the great Battle of Mag Itha.

Though Partholón was victorious, it would be a pyrrhic victory. The Muintir population was severely depleted, the survivors gathering together into one small settlement. Though they would attempt to rebuild, the next decade of plague, drought, and continued skirmishes with the surviving Fomori would eventually see the Muintir vanish from The Isles just as the Cessair had three centuries earlier.

The Third People

For centuries after the death of the last Muintir, the Fomorians once again held sole dominion over The Isles and slowly their population was replenished. So it was that when the Third People, led by King Nemed, arrived on the Isles, the Fomori wasted no time in attempting to repel these new invaders.

Initially the war went well for the invaders as Nemed successfully bested the Fomori in four major encounters culminating in the Battle of Ros Fraechain in which he slew the dual Fomori kings, Gann and Sengann. Mortally wounded in the battle, Nemed would pass just days after this victory.

With Nemed's only son, Artur, killed in the third battle against the Fomori, there was no clear line of succession. The people of Nemed turned on one another as various figures from Nemed's inner circle jockeyed for control.

The new kings of the Fomori, Morc and Connand, would take advantage of this internal warfare and launch another massive campaign to expel the invaders. Locked in bitter war with themselves, the people of Nemed were quickly overtaken by the resurgent Fomori and were forced to flee the Isles. The survivors would split into two factions, those who wished revenge against the Fomorians — the Tuatha De Danann — and those who wished to begin anew elsewhere — the Fir Bolg.

The Fir Bolg would travel to Greece, hoping to settle in the fledgling city states; however, they would quickly find themselves enslaved by the Athenians, who, viewing them as barbarians, used them only for menial labor.

The Tuatha De Danann would travel north from The Isles, their final destination still unknown.

The Return of the Fir Bolg

The Fir Bolg would spend the next two centuries as slaves to the Athenians, eventually coming to make up nearly a quarter of the city's population. In the aftermath of Sparta's sacking of Athens, the Fir Bolgs staged a massive slave revolt throughout the weakened city. Seizing what little remained of the Athenian fleet, they fled back towards the only other home their people had known before their enslavement.

Having heard the stories of their exile from their forebearers the Fir Bolg expected fierce resistance from the Fomori when they arrived, but what few Fomori they did encounter fled before them without a fight.

Eventually they would learn that in the aftermath of their expulsion from The Isles, the dual kings, Morc and Connand, had thrown the Fomori into a long and bloody civil war. The war would end with no victor, both kings dead and the Fomori forever weakened.

In time, the Fir Bolg and the Fomorians would

come to an accord. With both peoples exhausted from centuries of war and slavery, they agreed that The Isles would be shared between them.

This peace would last four centuries, during which the Fir Bolg spread across The Isles and established numerous new settlements as well as rebuilding many that had been originally founded by the first and second people. During this age it was not an uncommon sight to see Fomori dwelling among humans within these settlements.

Rise of the Tuatha Dé Danann

This truce on The Isles would not last. During the twilight of the fourth century of peace the Tuatha De Danann would return — appearing suddenly and without warning across The Isles, emerging wherever the veil between worlds was thin.

Their journey into the north had changed them. Though few in number, each Tuatha De Danann wielded tremendous power — great strength, powerful magics, control over nature, and near immortality.

Though they had come at first only to seek vengeance against the Fomori, they were disgusted to see their Fir Bolg kin living in peace with their hated enemies. More than vengeance, their time in the Otherworld had led the Tuatha De Danann to believe that the Fomorians were in fact cursed beings, born from roiling chaos to exist as malevolent beings.

Wasting no time with diplomacy, the Tuatha De Danann launched their attacks against the Fir Bolg and Fomori allies.

This short war would culminate in the First Battle of Magh Tuireadh in which the Fir Bolg champion Sreng would best the Tuath De king, Nuada, in single combat, removing his right arm at the shoulder. Though Sreng was victorious in this fight, the battle as a whole was lost.

In recognition of the strength shown by their fellow descendants of Nemed, Nuada agreed to allow the Fir Bolg to remain on The Isles so long as they would swear to two agreements: They would break all ties with the Fomorians and assist the Tuath De in wiping them from The Isles. They would also acknowledge the Tuath De as their new deities. The Fir Bolg agreed to both conditions and what is today the Celtic Pantheon began to manifest.

Milesians Ascendant

In time a Sixth People, the Milesians would arrive on The Isles. Originally from Gaul, these Celts had settled in northern Iberia before journeying north to the Isles. Their arrival was well-received by the Tuath De, who sought to expand the population

that worshiped them. The Milesians greatly outnumbered the Fir Bolg and soon found themselves the dominant and favored human population of the Isles. Today, the various tribes spread across the Isles all descend from the initial Milesian settlers. The only territory not under their control is Conchatta, the last refuge of the Fir Bolgs who chose to gather together in an increasingly small territory rather than be absorbed into the wider Celtic world.

The Tuath De soon found their worship spreading from the Milesians to the Celts in Gaul and central Europe, territory that now falls under the control of the Roman Pantheon.



Roman Invasion

For nearly two millennia, the Tuath De would rule the Isles and Gaul, until the dark times — until the Empire. The Roman-Celtic wars have raged on for centuries. In that time, the Celts have found themselves always on the back foot.

First Iberia fell, then Gaul, then islets throughout the channel before finally the Romans launched their invasion of the Isles proper. Though northern Alba and Eerie still remain free of Roman domination, the majority of the Isles are now under their control.

The centuries of occupation in Gaul and Iberia have driven the surviving mainland Tuath De such as Cernunnos, who was a primary deity of the Gaulic Celts until their Romanization, to return to where their people first ascended.

The Roman invasion was assisted by the treachery of multiple tribes in the south and east of Alba, who upon seeing the technology and power displayed by the Empire believed they would benefit from joining and be rewarded for doing so peacefully.

These traitor tribes would be well rewarded by the Romans for the first few decades, allowed to maintain their own kings and chiefs, so long as they provided a tax in goods and men to the Empire.

For a time, this worked well for both sides, but as the decades passed and the Romans became more established, they began to impose more direct oversight of the tribes. As the tribal leaders who had originally joined the Empire died, their territory would be absorbed under direct Imperial governorship.

The traitor tribes also realized they would never be fully recognized within the Empire. The Senatorial Provinces, those that elected the Roman Senate and held sway over the Empire, were limited to the Mediterranean. Even northern Iberia and Southern Gaul, fully Romanized and Latin-speaking, were denied a place in the Senate.

The Iceni Rebellion

Though the Iceni began as staunch Roman loyalists, this quickly changed after the death of King Prasutagus. The king's will was thrown out by the Roman governor and the previous agreements that stated his daughters would succeed him were nullified. The Romans announced they were taking direct control of all Iceni territory. Queen Boudica and her daughters were all publicly flogged before the Iceni people.

Believing the queen and her daughters broken and better used as pawns, the governor did not order their executions — a mistake that he would quickly regret. Boudicca and her daughters would escape the Roman camp they were being held at just a fortnight after their floggings.

Boudica, the warrior Queen, and her two daughters now lead the Iceni people alongside power heroes such as the druid lord Boc Rawlen, as well as volunteers from Alba and Eerie, in rebellion against the Roman conquerors. Rome's preoccupation with its new territories in Anatolia and the growing threat of the Germanic Tribes along the border have left little in the way of reinforcements. His two legions stretched thin; the governor is forced to rely more heavily on the Romanized Celts who make up his auxiliary forces.

The governor understands this is a very dangerous gamble. Should the Celts under his command prove to be less loyal than they present themselves to be, his arming and training them could very well spell disaster for the Roman occupation.

Though their territory is small, the Iceni have multiple members of the Celtic Pantheon directly fighting alongside them. Though the Celtic Pantheon holds strong resentment towards the Iceni for their collusion with Rome, they also realize they cannot unseat the Romans without the help of the traitor tribes. The Romans, far from the core territories of their Pantheon, receive little support from their own gods to offset this.



Chinese Kingdoms

Capital (former)

Chengzhou (1,200,000)

Major Cities

Dailang (500,000)

Linzi (350,00) Shangqiu (325,00)

Tang (250,000)

Yueyang (150,000)

Ying (100,000)

Leaders

Queen Dai of Wei, King Jin of Qin, King Jianyu of Qi, Governor Shi Yi of Chu, Council of Nine (Yan)

A vast empire rivaled only by Egypt in age, China has been ruled by a powerful series of dynasties for over three millennia. Indeed, the Zhou Empire was the world's preeminent power until only a decade ago. Rocked by the tyranny and madness of the last Zhou Emperor, this proud land has spiraled into a decade of turmoil and brutal conflict that has seen it splintered into five warring kingdoms, each seeking to exert their claim on the Imperial Throne. The current most powerful of these kingdoms is ruled by Queen Dai of Wei from the former Imperial city of Dailang. Though her kingdom encompasses the heartlands of the old Empire, it is beset on all sides and fully cut off from trade with the world at large. In the south the large yet underdeveloped Kingdoms of Qin and Chu have allied together to launch an assault against Queen Dai of Wei, even as they eye each other's land. To the north, the Xiongnu confederation, sensing the reeling empire's weakness has begun large-scale raiding. In the east, the mercantile kingdoms of Qi and Yan

maintain a monopoly on trade and tightly control what may enter Wei from the Korean and Japanese states.

Outside the borders of the Fallen Empire reactions have varied. The nearest neighbors, long vassal states of the Empire, have used the opportunity to break free while distant Rome has used the retreat of influence to increase their own across the states between the two. Parthia notably seeks a quick resolution and reunification to the warring kingdoms, both to balance out the power of Rome and so that the flow of trade may resume.

Sovereigns' Founding

The reign of the Three Sovereigns, Fu Xi, Nuwa, and Shennong saw these God-Emperors impart great gifts upon the people of the Yellow River Basin. The gods gifted mortals with the mundane and the mystic; introducing fishing, crafting, dam-building, and farming alongside teaching the arcanelly-gifted mortals in the arts of healing, scrying and defense.

It was during these times that the vast Golden Dam was built along the Yellow River. It was from the expansions of this fertile basin that the Three Sovereigns first established the Chinese Empire. For centuries there was growth, development, and prosperity under the stewardship of the Sovereigns.

As the centuries passed Fu Xi began to believe that the Sovereigns' time directly influencing mortals was coming to an end. In the 322nd Sovereign Year, Fu Xi announced he was leaving the Sovereign Council to focus on a higher plane, leaving Nuwa and Shennong to continue guiding the mortals. Fu Xi has not manifested physically in the world since this time.



Queen Dai

Sovereign Academies

These first students founded the Three Sovereign Academies — the three most important institutes of magical teachings in the world. Even in the current times, students from across the world make the trek across dangerous war-torn battlefields to study the vast repositories of knowledge. Fu Xi Academy, centered in the ancient capital of Chengzhou, specializes in divination, illusion, and conjuration. Nuwa Academy, based in Yuzhou, specializes in evocation, necromancy, and abjuration. Shennong Academy, based in Yuetang, specializes in transmutation and enchantment.

The Great Flood

Where the Sovereigns sought to teach and build, other ruinous powers sought to undo the work they had started in uplifting the mortals.

Gonggong — a powerful water deity and dark mirror of Fu Xi — and his minister, the nine-headed snake deity Xiangliu, worked for years in secret, spreading plagues and poisoning the waterways of entire ecosystems to drive out what they saw as the mortal taint.

In the summer of the 372nd Sovereign Year, the Red Hand Confederation, a loose coalition of tribes to the Yellow Basin's north launched a surprise attack, their coordination and dark magics catching the defenders flat-footed. Their leader Hai Shu, known as the Bronze Beetle, surprised the defenders again, bypassing the primary settlements along the river on a blazing pace towards the Golden Dam. The forces that tried to intercept were easily cut down, the Bronze Beetle and his army empowered by a dark force.

Enraged by the senseless destruction and slaughter, Nuwa vowed to take immediate action and set about forming a massive army, led by the warrior-mages of the academies.

One of these was the mage Huang, who upon seeing the vast destruction caused by the Red

Hand's attack had already set about forming fellow arcanists into a force to strike back. When Nuwa found him and his soldiers, she named him her general and put him to marshalling their combined forces.

Through the great sacrifice of its garrison, the Golden Dam survived until Nuwa's army arrived. In the face of Nuwa and her warrior-mages, the Bronze Beetle's army collapsed and he and its remnants were cornered on the Worlds' Mountain above the dam.

In the face of death at Nuwa's hands, Hai Shu chose instead to commit suicide, bashing his skull against a jagged rock on the peak of the mountain. It was then that Gonggong's true target would be fully revealed. As Hai Shu died, the foul energies Gonggong had gifted him tore out of him and ripped a great hole in the sky from which began to pour vast oceans of water down upon the world below the mountain.

As Nuwa moved to heal the wound in the sky, Gonggong made his appearance. Though powerful, Nuwa and Huang were losing ground quickly until the sudden intervention of Shennong, who, spurred by Nuwa's action, had followed her armies to the Golden Dam. While Shennong held Gonggong at bay, Nuwa reached the tear. Just as the wound was about to seal, the serpent minister Xiangliu struck. Appearing from the shadows of the mountain with a poisoned blade, his strike would not be true, as Huang intercepted the attack meant for the goddess. With the wound in the sky healed, Nuwa turned her powers on Xiangliu, who, being far less capable in direct confrontation than his master, was quickly overwhelmed with his nine heads shrieking curses as they burned and withered away.

The wound sealed and his minister dead, Gonggong realized his final plan had failed and made a quick retreat, his work unfinished.

Huang awoke in this aftermath to find his wound being tended by Nuwa herself, the only one who could cleanse Xiangliu's poison. As he thanked the Sovereign, she assured him that it was he who deserved the thanks of every mortal in the empire. It was then Nuwa named him Huang Di, Emperor.

Nuwa decided during this time that Fu Xi was right, it was time to focus less on the material running of the Empire and to instead focus on



ensuring such devastating attacks would never happen again. She and Shennong had come to an agreement; the Sovereign Council would dissolve and the mortals would be placed in charge of their own destiny.

Nuwa left in hunt of Gonggong, eventually cornering the vile water God and trapping him beneath the Lion Stones. She then departed the material realm to join her husband Fu Xi.

Shennong decided to remain in the material world, retiring as a hermit to the peak of the Worlds' Mountain, he would act as a source of wisdom and guidance for the first five Emperors. He still resides on the mountain's peak and is the only Sovereign to have been seen directly in nearly three millennia.

Huang Di, the Yellow Emperor, would be the first mortal to rule the Sovereigns' domain. He would be followed by the White, Blue, Black, and Red emperors. These five represent the only mortal rulers to ascend to a form of godhood after their reigns.

Road to Collapse

The Empire founded by the Sovereigns would stand for three millennia, growing into the most powerful and populous state in the known world. Through five dynasties, all descended from Huangdi, they would see constant expansion.

When the Hai dynasty fell four centuries ago, the Imperial Throne fell to the small and distant Zhou clan. Previously too far removed to be considered for the highest positions, the Zhou dynasty became obsessed with maintaining the purity of Huangdi's blood within their line.

When the man who was to be the final Zhou Emperor took the throne, he was stunted and crippled, unable to move without the aid of a litter. The Emperor was paranoid and prone to fits of rage. It was during the turmoil of his years that the Imperial Army was converted from a beloved protector of the Empire into its brutal enforcers.

It was during the tenth year of the Mad

Emperor's reign when renowned Imperial General Yuan Yi launched a rebellion against the Zhou. Though bloody, the civil war was brief and the rebels quickly found themselves in control of the Imperial Cities. It is believed that all members of the Zhou clan were killed when the palace fell.

Celebration quickly gave way to more bloodshed as the various warlords began to jockey for control in the power vacuum. Yuan Xi himself was killed less than a fortnight after victory was declared. After another decade of strife, the various rebel powers had consolidated into the current Five Kingdoms.



Culture & Government

Currently the warring states are divided into five kingdoms, though only three of these are actually true monarchies. Wei, Qin, and Qi, are all headed by absolute monarchs whose words and dictates are to be treated as the Emperor's once were. Chu is under the command of the former Imperial Governor for the Southern Provinces, Shi Yi, who maintains that he has a surviving member of the Zhou Clan in his care whom he means to install on the Imperial throne. Meanwhile, Yan is under the control of a cabal of powerful merchant families that rule via the Council of Nine.

The Kingdoms all use variations of the old Imperial system, ensuring centralized control maintained by subdivisions governed by appointed ministers.

The average person living within the various Kingdoms are much the same as they are elsewhere in the world. They work and toil in silence while trying to avoid the gaze of those

above them.

Though quite metropolitan in comparison to many other nations, the majority of the peasantry still subsists off farming, fishing, and herding.

Primarily living in villages and hamlets of less than one hundred people, many live their entire lives never leaving the area around their homes. In many of these villages magic is known only in tales, and even adventurers of small arcane skill can impress and frighten.

Within the major metropolises can be found markets and trade squares larger than any save the Great Bazaar of Babylon. Here, fine silks, rare texts, and ancient artifacts can all be found in great quantity for those with the coin to pay. Many western trade caravans out of Egypt, Greece, and Rome can be found plying their wares and stocking up on new ones for their journeys home.

Pork is the most commonly consumed meat for the inner empire, though the coastal cities and villages typically have higher fish diets. Soybeans, leeks and rice are commonly grown vegetables. Rice wines and various teas are the most popular recreational beverages.







Egypt

Capital

Alexandria (750,000)

The Nile

Memphis (600,000), Thebes (400,000),
Heliopolis(300,000), Karnak (200,000),
Abydos (100,000), Luxor (50,000)

Leader

Pharaoh Lysandra



At the western edge of the fertile crescent lies an ancient land of towering monuments and warm sands. At once a wonder and a contradiction, this oldest of civilizations finds itself juxtaposed between the life-giving Nile River and the barren desert which surrounds it.

Just as the banks of the Nile ebb and flow, so too do the fortunes of its people. Over the course of its over 3,000 year history, Egypt has endured more than its fair share of foreign invaders and political upheavals. But the people of Egypt are nothing if not resilient, recognizing the fleeting nature of all things, even life and death.

The Nile

In order to understand the history of Egypt, one must first understand the Nile. Believed to be the longest river in all of creation, the Nile flows northward out of central Africa for over four thousand Roman miles. Two major tributaries, the White Nile and the Blue Nile flow together to finally culminate in the Nile River Delta, which empties into the Mediterranean Sea.

Humans have gathered around the fertile banks of the Nile for uncounted millennia, but it was by

understanding and harnessing the pattern of the great river's routine flood cycle that a stable system of agriculture and irrigation could be developed. Some credit the river god Hapi with this valuable lesson, while others point to Thoth, god of knowledge and time.

In understanding that the flooding of the Nile was not some chaotic event, but instead an ordered cycle, these early Egyptians were able to develop one of the earliest known calendars, which balanced the ebb and flow of the Nile with the movements of celestial bodies.

The year was divided into three seasons. Akhet, the first of these seasons, denotes the period of inundation in which the banks of the Nile overflow. The middle season, Peret is the season of growth and emergence as the Nile's waters begin to recede. Finally Shemu closes out the year with the season of harvest and low-water, when the Nile is at its most shallow point.

Mountains of the Moon

According to the historian Iasonas Spiteriades, the Greek merchant and explorer Eleonora Gereia is credited with discovering the fabled source of the Nile River. After becoming lost on a sea voyage to India, Eleonora landed at the African trading post of Rhapta. Traveling inland for over one month led her to a place the locals called the Mountains of the Moon, from which numerous massive waterfalls emptied into a river which flowed north. Knowing of only one river which flowed in such a peculiar direction, Eleonora concluded that she had indeed discovered the source of the Nile.

Rise of the Pharaohs

The introduction of efficient and predictable methods of irrigation and agriculture allowed numerous thriving settlements to propagate along the Nile, eventually coalescing into two major regions: Lower Egypt in the north, centered



Pharaoh Lysandra

around the Nile River Delta, and Upper Egypt in the south, ruled by the man that would come to be known as King Narmer the Uniter.

Though successful in bringing together the tribes of Upper Egypt, Narmer had greater ambitions. Despite numerous territorial skirmishes with the tribes of Lower Egypt, he believed that a unified Egypt was possible, and so set out to bring the two realms together.

After a peace offering of gold and surplus grain was rejected by the rulers of Lower Egypt, Narmer sought the counsel of the god Horus. Thus it was with the blessing of Horus that King Narmer marched his army into Lower Egypt, overthrew their rulers, and became the first Pharaoh of Egypt. For this reason, it is the blessing of Horus that grants Pharaohs their power to this day.

Old Kingdom

The Old Kingdom period is perhaps best characterized by its unrivaled monuments, including the Great Sphinx and the pyramids of the Giza Necropolis. Power was consolidated in the Pharaoh, with the land divided among districts called nomes, each with its own nomarch appointed and monitored by the priesthood.

The Pharaoh, with a direct connection to the gods, was worshipped as a divine being in his or her own right. Blessed with an unnaturally long life, the Pharaoh was also the first human guaranteed an afterlife. Funerary cults dedicated to Isis, Osiris, and Anubis were founded in this period, and, though their secrets and spells were at first reserved only for the Pharaoh, the priesthood and eventually all of Egypt would have a chance at life beyond death.

Towards the end of the two hundred year reign of Sahure of the Sixth Dynasty, the power of the Pharaohs had become increasingly decentralized. Nomarchs across Egypt had instituted policies of hereditary rule, such that numerous small dynasties now dotted the land.

Sahure's three sons all lived to old age, but without the life-giving blessing bestowed by the office of Pharaoh, each of his heirs died in turn. After his second century of life, Sahure was

considered old even for a Pharaoh, and some believe his reluctance to give up power even as the nomarchs grew in influence angered the gods. Others point to the brazeness of the nomarchs themselves as the inciting incident of the dark times to come.

The time between the fall of the Old Kingdom and the beginning of the Middle Kingdom was a period of drought, civil war, and foreign invasion. Widespread famine incited territorial conflicts between nomarchs, and many of these local rulers saw fit to name themselves king. According to the Greek historian Kleon, seventy kings of Egypt rose and fell in as many days.

To complicate matters, a foreign army of skilled bowmen, perhaps urged onwards by their own famine, poured from the mediterranean to plunder the farms of the Nile River Delta. Led by Lukka the sea king, these mysterious raiders disappeared as quickly as they arrived, leaving empty fields in their wake.

Of the countless warlords and rival nomarchs that vied for power, one stands above the rest: Nitokris of Het-Nesut. After subduing a half dozen neighboring rivals, Nitokris conquered Memphis, former capital of the Old Kingdom. His grandson, Menkaure The Mad, secured an alliance with the warrior princes of Siut before plundering the royal necropolis of Abydos.

For, Khaba of Thebes, the desecration at Abydos was too great an insult to ignore.

Beseeching Osiris, he promised to punish Menkaure for the destruction of a sacred tomb which had once housed one of the god's severed limbs. With the blessing of Osiris, Khaba marched his army into Lower Egypt.



Middle Kingdom

Mirroring the victory of Narmer the first Pharaoh, Khaba conquered Het-Nesut and toppled the tenth dynasty before reuniting Egypt under what would later become known as the Middle Kingdom. Crowned as Pharaoh of the eleventh dynasty, Khaba moved the capital to Thebes. It was at this point that Osiris became prominently associated with the rule of the Pharaoh, just as Horus had during the dynasties of the Old Kingdom. When Ashotep the Pharaoh Queen died without heirs, the twelfth dynasty came to an end, and with it the Middle Kingdom's golden age. The subsequent half century of short-lived kings ruled without the Pharaonic blessing, and were woefully unprepared for the armies of their Hyksos conquerers.

Foreign Pharaohs

It is worth noting that many who claim the title of Pharaoh began as foreign invaders before adopting the culture and customs of their subjects. The last native-born Pharaoh, Khalfani, ruled over three hundred years ago, and led a spirited defense before finally being driven out of Egypt by the Persians. Some say Khalfani fled to Macedonia and even magically influenced the birth of Alexander the Great, but his final fate remains a mystery.

The Middle Kingdom had stood for five centuries, a period marked by relative peace and consolidation in stark contrast to the previous century's chaos. Even the invasion of the Hyksos, which saw the end of the thirteenth dynasty and the reign of the first foreign-born Pharaoh was a relatively peaceful affair, if only due to its incredibly one-sided nature. The Hyksos poured into Egypt out of the Levant, and with them came innovative new weapons of war. With armor of scaled bronze and the nearly unassailable heavy chariot, the Hyksos devastated

militias of Egyptian conscripts armed only with leather hides and copper-tipped spears. One by one the cities of Lower Egypt surrendered, with most never raising sword or bow against their foes. Finally, as the Hyksos general Salitis marched on Karnak, king Nefer offered to grant him the title and blessings of the Pharaoh. In return, the Hyksos would leave Karnak and the area of Upper Egypt immediately surrounding it untouched. With the deal struck, the Hyksos would begin their occupied rule over Egypt from their capital in Avaris. Eventually, however, it would be Salitis' choice to spare the Karnak kings that would be their undoing. Nearly a century of Hyksos reign left the people of Egypt yearning for a return to the prosperity of their Golden Age. The Hyksos imposed Levantine and Canaanite customs onto their subjects, with cruel punishments for those whom clung to the old ways.

Taking advantage of a series of revolts against the fifteenth dynasty, as well as an ongoing Kushite border conflict, Sekhem of Karnak followed the example of his forebears and marched his armies into Lower Egypt. Just as Horus and Osiris had granted their blessing to Narmer and Khaba, Sekhem donned the crown of Amun and used its power to seize the Hyksos-occupied territory. Sekhem did not live to see the Hyksos fully driven from the Nile River Delta, but his duel with the Hyksos Pharaoh Khyan is legendary, with both Pharaohs using powerful magic to mortally wound the other.

Sekhem's son, Senusret took up the now combined Pharaonic mantle, and with a liberated Egyptian army, tore through the remaining defenders before driving them back into the Levant. The siege of Avaris is said to have lasted only a single day, with the defenders throwing down their weapons before the Egyptian army just as the Egyptians had before the Hyksos a century before.

New Kingdom

With the Hyksos defeated and the power of the Pharaoh once again invested in an Egyptian dynasty, the period which came to be known as the New Kingdom began. Eclipsing even the prosperity of the Old and Middle Kingdoms, the next five

hundred years would see an unprecedented expansion of the Egyptian Empire both through trade and force of arms.

Seeking to secure the newly reunified Egypt against further foreign invasion, Horemheb of the eighteenth dynasty led the first of a series of campaigns into the Levant. What began as probing attempts to gauge the strength of potential foreign foes evolved into a concerted and expansionary military effort.

Previously, Egyptian rulers were loath to feed and fund large standing armies for extended periods, instead relying on local militias commanded by regional nomarchs to suppress revolts and defend against foreign invasion. The reign and subsequent fall of the Hyksos demonstrated the need for fundamental change in the structure of Egypt's military.

Pharaoh Horemheb is credited with organizing the newly formed Egyptian military into regiments, each devoted to a specific god. Temple priests were assigned to each regiment, serving directly under and advising the regimental commander, though some powerful priests fulfilled dual-roles as both military officers and spiritual leaders.

Having borrowed the weapons and tactics of the Hyksos, the Egyptian campaign into the Levant was met with early success. Egyptian war chariots, both lighter and faster than the native Hittite chariots proved highly effective as they peppered their more sluggish counterparts with arrows fired from compound bows.

Satisfied with his territorial gains and meeting increased Hittite resistance, Horemheb chose to return to Egypt to celebrate his victories, but not before ordering the construction of a series of border forts as an effective buffer against potential foreign reprisals.

The Pharaohs of the eighteenth dynasty enjoyed their newfound wealth and security as their people no longer chafed under the rule of foreign invaders. With a powerful army and bountiful resources at their disposal, each subsequent ruler sought to make their mark on history by building

powerful monuments and temples to the gods. A new period of growth and construction rivaling even that of the Old Kingdom began.

Perhaps most notable amongst these Pharaoh-Builders was Tausret, Queen of Karnak. Credited with reestablishing trade relations with foreign lands that had been abandoned since the invasion of the Hyksos, Tausret sought to expand her empire though diplomacy rather than military might. Ships laden with Egyptian trade goods set out for distant lands, each returning with foreign delights. Over two dozen myrrh trees, not native to Egypt, were planted within the Karnak temple complex.

Established Trade

To this day the trade routes established by Tausret ensure Egypt remains one of the most prominent commerce centers in the known world. Modern Egyptian merchants hold great influence over the trade of the Eastern Mediterranean, controlling both the flow of goods and information. Merchants such as Jabari of Alexandria are known to be favored by the priests and politicians for their insight into potential rivals.

This temple complex would eventually serve as her personal mortuary, but despite its impressive scope stands as only one of hundreds of grand building projects ordered during her reign. Many sites that had been previously left desecrated after the invasion of the Hyksos were selected for repair, with some restored temples dating as far back as the Old Kingdom.

Subsequent Pharaohs would follow this example, constructing immense monuments to the gods, or to themselves, with increasingly extravagant displays of wealth. One such culmination of this trend is Amenemhet's temple complex at Luxor, where traditionally Egyptian rulers accepted the blessing of the gods and ascended as Pharaohs.



As the wealth and power of Egypt grew, so too did the office of the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh represented the link between the gods and humanity, a divine being in his or her own right. With each army regiment dedicated to a specific god as opposed to a local nomarch or city, their loyalty to the Pharaoh had never been stronger.

Amenemhet used this power to great military effect, continuing to reinforce the Levant border against the Hittites, but also in a series of campaigns against the Kushites to the south. Kushite archers had served as renowned mercenaries for centuries, so annexation of the Nubian territory was no small feat.

Using the tactics learned in their conflict with the Hyksos, the Egyptians secured a large swathe of Kushite land, despite fierce resistance. Though it took several years, the annexation of Kush as a vassal state was completed under the reign of Montuhotep. The first viceroy of Kush, Iufni, was a son of the Pharaoh, and it was only through marriage, not bloodshed, that the Kushites finally accepted his rule.

*Jabari of
Alexandria*



The Amarna Heresy

The golden age of the New Kingdom was marred by an event that would come to be known as the Amarna Heresy. A brazen act of hubris, the story of Thutmose stands as a testament to the corrupting influence of power.

Pharaoh Thutmose rose to power at the height of the New Kingdom's prosperity. With Kush secured as a vassal state and Egyptian territory extending deep into the Levant, he turned his gaze inwards and devised a means to increase his power to yet unreached heights. His armies, though largely loyal to him, only followed his orders out of devotion to the gods. Should he somehow prove unworthy in the often fickle eyes of the pantheon, he could see himself stripped of his power in a heartbeat.

Jealous of the worship and devotion offered solely to the gods, Thutmose first set about moving the capital from Thebes, to Amarna, a site upon which he would construct a temple unmatched by his predecessors. This temple was not devoted to a specific god, but instead to the solar disc, which would come to be called Aten.

It is said that Aten was the means by which the gods bestowed the power of the Pharaoh onto a mortal man. Through Pharaonic decree, Thutmose ordered that Aten was to be recognized as the true progenitor of all life, and that daily worship and offerings were to be presented to Aten. As Aten grew in power, so too did the powers invested in the Pharaoh, and Thutmose became increasingly bold.

Though thought to be strange by some, it was not the first time the pantheon had been shaken, or that worship had been changed. Ra, Horus, Osiris, Set, Amun, all had seen their turn as head of the pantheon. Had Thutmose stopped there, perhaps Aten would have become fully personified, no longer a mere symbol of power, but a fully-realized power itself. But Thutmose wasn't truly interested in creating a new god to rule the pantheon — he sought to elevate himself alone.

In a Pharaonic decree that shocked the entire empire, Thutmose announced that all worship save that of Aten, and by extension, himself, would be outlawed. All temples devoted to other gods would be repurposed, and all priests would be retrained in order to properly proselytize the new state religion of Atenism.

Across Egypt, revolts formed and were quickly and violently put down by Thutmose's armies. Factions loyal to the Pharaoh hoped to gain favor by showing their devotion to the new religion. Statues and monuments to the gods of the Egyptian

pantheon were defaced or destroyed, while priests of the old gods were executed for refusing to convert.

Many priests agreed to be converted and retrained in order to avoid punishment, yet secret shrines to the old gods remained throughout Thutmose's reign. Some say it was these secret priests that called down the plague that was to come. Some say it was the work of the Kushites, the Hittites, or even Meritaten, his son.

In any event, a solar eclipse, followed by an epidemic of unknown origin struck Egypt in the final years of Thutmose's reign. Ravaged by the strange disease, Thutmose was left horribly disfigured and ruled in his last days of life from behind a ceremonial golden mask, which was incorporated into the funerary dress of his remains.

Meritaten the boy Pharaoh took power immediately following his father's death. He wasted no time in undoing the damage his father had done, abolishing Atenism in favor of a return to the old gods of the Egyptian pantheon. Though his reign was short-lived, Meritaten remains as one of the most celebrated Pharaohs of his time, having reversed the almost universally hated edicts of his father's rule.

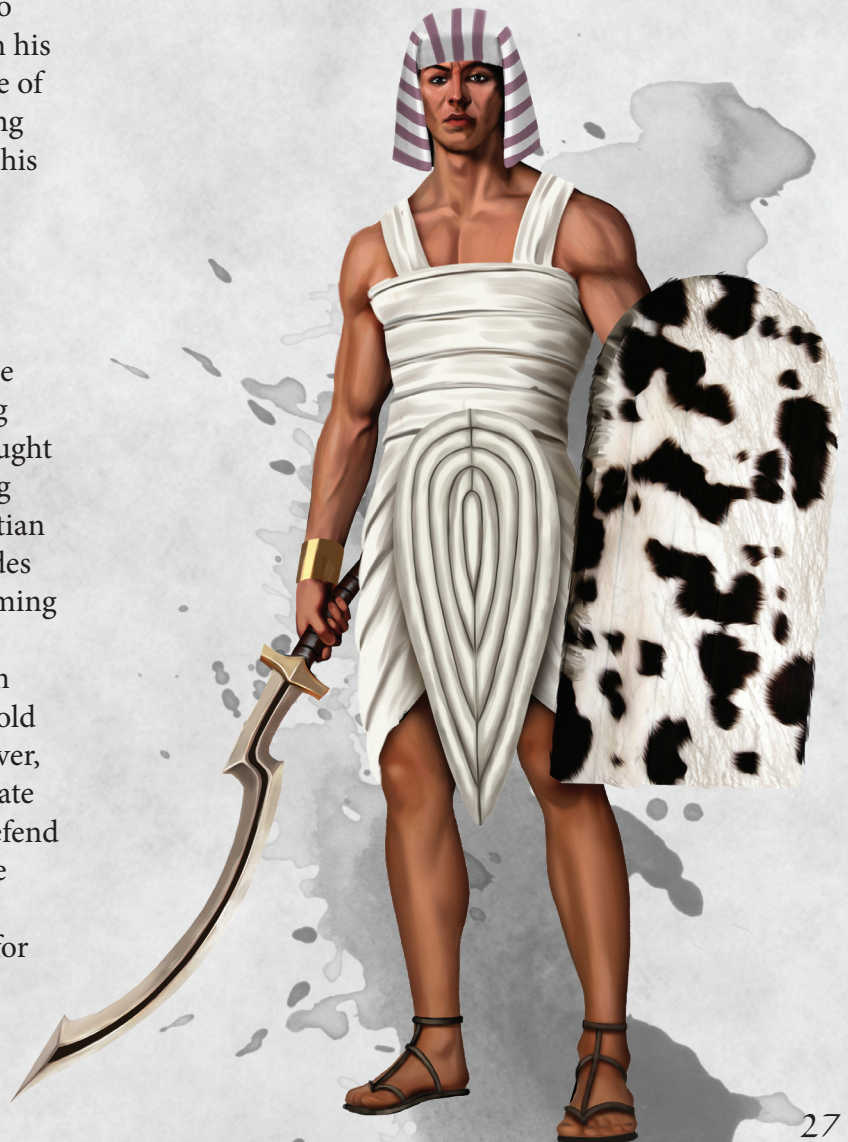
Achaemenid Invasion

The end of the New Kingdom's golden age came in the form of a foreign invasion and a cunning betrayal. The Achaemenid Empire had long sought to make the wealth of Egypt its own, employing Greek mercenaries to test the strength of Egyptian defenses. One such mercenary, Nereus of Rhodes managed to infiltrate the temple at Karnak, coming within striking distance of Pharaoh Khalfani before being surrounded by his royal guards. In spite of his position, the mercenary offered a bold proposition: fill the hold of his trireme with silver, and he and his company would use their intimate knowledge of Achaemenid battle strategy to defend Egypt's borders. The Pharaoh, impressed by the Greek's fearlessness, agreed.

Nereus' company would fulfill their bargain for the coming months, fighting increasingly violent Achaemenid incursions on both land and sea. Soon, however, the trickle

of scouting vessels and mercenaries would become a sea of ships and soldiers as a full invasion force was mounted. King Ochus, having grown weary of toying with Egypt's outer defenses, elected to personally oversee the invasion.

Surrounded and outmatched, Nereus' trireme was set ablaze and quickly sank to the bottom of the Mediterranean along with the Pharaoh's silver. Clinging to the hull of Ochus' flagship, Nereus once again proved his cunning by coming within striking distance of the Achaemenid king. At spearpoint, with what remained of his company being fished from the sea, the mercenary gave his offer: grant him a fleet of silver-laden triremes for the one he had lost, and he and his company would use their intimate knowledge of Egyptian defenses to aid in their conquest. The King, amused by the mercenary's candor, agreed to grant Nereus a fleet, however, Ochus was no fool. The silver would come only when the conquest of Egypt was complete.



With Nereus' company replenished at Cypress, the combined mercenary and Achaemenid forces made quick work of the outlying Egyptian defenses, forcing their way through Lower Egypt as the Pharaoh retreated to Memphis. The siege of Memphis was set to last months as waves of Achaemenid troops were pushed back by the Pharaoh's armies and a fresh company of mercenaries came to the Pharaoh's aid. Nereus, at Ochus' behest, approached the mercenary camp.

Though rivals, Ochus' great wealth and the promise of plundered Egyptian gold were enough to sway them to the Achaemenid cause.

Unable to cow the panicking populace and with a combined Greek and Persian force at the gates, the Pharaoh fled south into Kush with a small retinue of guards and retainers, but the Kushites did not accept him as warmly as he had hoped. Some speculate he looked to Greece as a possible refuge, perhaps aiming to bolster his depleted forces with yet more mercenaries, but if this is so, nothing came of it, as Khalfani never returned to Egypt.

As Memphis was looted, Ochus crowned himself Pharaoh, officially incorporating Egypt into the Achaemenid Empire. The mercenaries whom had been instrumental in his conquest were handsomely rewarded with the spoils of Egypt, but none so handsomely as Nereus of Rhodes. He received the fleet of silver he had been promised, on top of being elevated to the title of Satrap of Egypt. Nereus would govern in Ochus' stead for less than a year before becoming disinterested in his position, choosing to delegate more and more of his duties by the day before abruptly disappearing (along with his ships and his silver) across the sea. Though short lived, Nereus' position as a Greek-born ruler of Egypt would set an important precedent for the centuries to come.



Recent History

The Achaemenid Persians controlled Egypt for less than a decade, but in that time a great deal of damage was done. The sacking of Memphis was only the beginning, as the desecration of tombs and temples throughout the land became commonplace. Many sacred codexes and papyri were stolen or destroyed, with the knowledge they contained lost to all but the gods. Priests and common practitioners of the traditional magicks and religious rites of Egypt were harshly persecuted, and loyalists to the exiled Pharaoh were imprisoned or killed.

So, when Alexander the Great of Macedon (a direct descendent of Jupiter through Hercules) arrived in Egypt, he was greeted not as a conquerer, but as a liberator. Crowned Pharaoh and declared a hero of Egypt, Alexander would go on to dismantle the Achaemenid Empire piece by piece. A city named for him, Alexandria, was founded on the Nile River Delta, and would soon become the capital of all Egypt. It would also one day hold his tomb.

Upon Alexander's death, a violent war of succession split his generals and companions into rival factions, each vying for a piece of the vast territory he had conquered. Ptolemy I, Alexander's half-brother and most trusted officer gathered his forces, and with Alexander's body in tow, marched on Egypt, meeting no resistance from the mourning populace.

Upon Alexander's burial, Ptolemy, dubbed "the savior" would be crowned Pharaoh of Egypt, beginning a dynasty that has lasted three hundred years. Pharaoh Lysandra, the current ruler of Egypt, maintains a careful balance between the forces under her control. From her temple-palace in Alexandria, she serves the dual role of Queen and High Priestess of the Egyptian religion. A masterful diplomat and linguist, she has thus far proven to be more than capable of handling the rigorous demands of her position, but those challenges become more numerous and severe by the day.

To the south, most pressingly, the Kingdom of Kush has staged a series of open incursions into Upper Egypt, claiming a swathe of previously contested land as newly annexed territory.

Queen Amanirenas has declared herself Pharaoh, staging what has already proven to be a very costly civil war, claiming retribution for conflicts centuries past. Worse still, this upstart Pharaoh claims to now hold the legendary crown of Upper Egypt. So long as Amanirenas holds half of the Double Crown, Lysandra's rule will always be called into question.

To the east, the Parthians have subsumed and replaced the former Seleucid Empire. Their victory was made possible in no small part by Lysandra's predecessors, whom saw fit to endlessly harry the Seleucid's border territories. Unfortunately, little was gained from these incursions, and the Ptolemaic forces at her disposal remain somewhat diminished. For their part, the Parthians seem content to remain trading partners for the time being, but their wealth and excellent position on the newly formed silk road make them a tempting prize.

And to the north lies perhaps the greatest threat and greatest opportunity. The Romans have long looked enviously across the Mediterranean at the wealth and majesty of Egypt, and now their military might has grown to rival any force in the known world. Some would see only a looming beast of an Empire, another enemy to be feared, but Lysandra recognizes the divisions already forming for the exploitable weaknesses they are. Perhaps in pitting the Romans against themselves, the young Pharaoh might solve her problems on both fronts.





Greece

Capital

Athens (300,000)

Major Cities

Smyrna (90,000) Thebes (50,000)

Leader

High Councilor Nikodemos

Capital

Thessaloniki (150,000)

Major Cities

Byzantium (30,000), Nikaia (50,000), Thassos (22,000)

Leader

Phillip VI (Disputed)



ATHENS

Athens, at the head of the Neo-Delian League, is one of the four primary powers of the Hellenistic world alongside Sparta, Macedonia and the far-flung Indo Greek kingdom.

Though named for a war goddess and quite capable in warfare, the city of Athens is today known primarily for its arts, craftsmanship, and democratic form of governance.

Led by a council of nine Archons and legislated by a pair of assemblies, Athens is seen by many as the only true democracy left in the world in the wake of Jupiter and the Roman Senate declaring Lucius Valerius Emperor.

Origins

The founding of Athens is marred in uncertainty. What is known is that the city was once ruled by a series of kings whose dynasty had been blessed by Athena to rule the city that bore her name, but that sometime before the Persian wars they had been overthrown by a wealthy oligarchic cabal.

The chosen of Athena, the Athenians found themselves at the forefront of the Persian Wars and alongside their Spartan allies they led the Hellenic world in a series of decisive victories over the Persian Achaemenid Empire. A loose

coalition of Hellenic states, the Hellenic League, was formed with Athens, Sparta, and Corinth at its head to continue the efforts against Persia and free the remaining occupied Hellenic lands. Though short-lived, this coalition managed to free Thebes, Macedonia, and the coasts of Anatolia from Persian overlordship. It would also lay the framework for the future Delian and Neo-Delian Leagues.

It was in the aftermath of this league that Athens began to experiment with the concept of democracy. The Hellenic League had functioned on the basis of majority vote among its members, though the larger cities had been given more votes.

The cabal appointed a nobleman named Draco, also known as Drakon, to create a new written and codified constitution, one whose laws would be known to all citizens.

Draco's constitution would transform the cabal into the Ekklesia, an elected body whose members were chosen by and from only the wealthiest families within the city. Hoplites were also eligible to stand for office, though not to vote.

Birth of Democracy

Draco's reforms were quite unpopular with all but the wealthy. The Thetai, the lowest class within Athens, were left with essentially no legal protections and any who missed debt payments to those of a higher class were subject to immediate enslavement and sale to foreign powers. The Thetai were also subject to execution for minor crimes such as petty theft or trespassing. The people chafed under what became known as the "Draconian Constitution."

In the face of massive unyielding unrest and constant riots, the Ekklesia appointed the statesman Solon to rewrite the constitution of Athens. Under Solon's reforms, all current debts were abolished and all debt slaves freed. Every Athenian adult who had resided in the city for at least ten years would be allowed to not only vote, but to hold office within the government of the city, save of the position of Archon which would still be limited to the wealthiest citizens, now known as the Pentakosiomedimni. The penalties for petty crime and theft were severely reduced and no Athenian

citizen could be turned into a slave, regardless of debt or crime.

The city would be governed by an elected council of nine Archons and legislated by the Ekklesia and the Boule, a new legislative body whose members would come from the new middle classes, the Hippeis and the Zeugitae. Though the Hippeis have since gained the right to be elected Archon, the Zeugitae are still limited to the Ekklesia and the Boule. Finally, The Council of Areopagus would be the city's high court, its members would consist of all former Archons who had finished their year in office and did not currently hold other office.

Though still barred from the highest offices, the Thetai quickly found themselves the dominate majority within the Ekklesia, a power they still wield today.



Reeva the Satyr Lord

The Spartan Betrayal

As Athenian democracy solidified, it quickly became clear that the newly elected government was happy to live up to their namesake's warlike tendencies. Appointing the general Thrasybulus to lead the subjugation, soon all other cities within Attica were under Athenian control, each with its own elected sub-Ekklesia, though with Archons appointed directly by Athens.

Though Sparta had long been growing wary of rising Athenian military power and the spread of elected governance that followed in its wake, it was not until Athens turned its eyes towards Corinth that Sparta declared war.

Though the Spartan forces proved superior on the ground, Athenian naval supremacy combined with

defensive positioning prevented Spartan forces from entering Attica proper.

Athenian naval dominance would only be countered by what many Greeks still considered treason to this day — the Spartans reached an accord with the Achaemenid Empire. What was promised and what was given remains shrouded in secrecy, but whatever the Spartans offered, the Achaemenid fleet swept through Delian League waters. At the battle of Egina the Athenian fleet was crushed by the combined Spartan-Achaemenid force and its remnants scattered across the Aegean.

It was then that Smyrna, leading nearly half the Delian League, declared support for Sparta and war on Athens. This ended the supply of gold, silver, and food to Athens and the Athenians soon found their territory reduced to Attica alone.

Surrounded, starving, and facing imminent revolt from its own people, Athens sent envoys to Sparta to declare their unconditional surrender. Thrasybulus was furious and along with a cadre of loyal soldiers attempted to force the Archons to recall the surrender declaration. However, these plans were frustrated and Thrasybulus imprisoned.

The Thirty Tyrants

After their defeat at the hands of the Spartans the Athenians were spared the complete annihilation many of their vassals had hoped for. The Spartans declared that though Athens must be punished it would not be torn down. The new Council of Thebes was furious and demanded the city be torn down stone by stone and its entire populace enslaved and sold to the Persian Empire.

The Spartan King Anaxilas intervened, however, stating that Athens, though guilty of many crimes, was a key member of the Greek world. Citing their support in the wars against the Persians and their leading role saving the Greek world from the horrors of the Bone Wars, when the exiled Egyptian Priest Sethon and his followers attempted to conquer the Hellenes with depraved necro-magics.

At the suggestion of Admiral Lysander, the Spartan King appointed a group of thirty pro-Spartan and anti-democracy Athenians to rule the city and purge it of its democratic elements.

The Tyrants quickly began stripping power from the remaining institutions of Athens.

Local Legends

Many notable heroes have emerged from the Hellenic world. Some of these, such as Heracles, become larger than life, while others remain more common folk heroes. Such is the case with druid Aislinn. Druidic magics are uncommon in the Greco-Roman world and she has used hers to attain local fame. It was her actions toppling the petty-despot of Calydon that allowed the city to recently embrace democracy.



Aislinn

The Areopagus, the cities highest court, was disbanded. Its powers were transferred to the Thirty themselves who would personally appoint the councils to oversee each trial. The Ekklesia was disbanded and each of its five hundred members sentenced to death, less than two dozen managing to escape the city with their lives. The Boule was disbanded, though its members were exiled as opposed to executed.

Eight months into the Tyrants rule, five percent of the Athenian population had been executed and four percent had been exiled including Thrasybulus.

Thrasybulus and his supporting sailors fled to Samos where they met with the remnants of the Athenian fleet that had yet to surrender. Here they gathered many others who had been exiled, both by the Tyrants and the War Tribunal. This collective resistance then overwhelmingly elected Thrasybulus as their leader.

Thrasybulus and his exiles made for Corinth where the tyrant, chafing under the even more brutal Spartan domination, agreed to join them. Raising his arms in defiance, the tyrant had the Spartan garrison ambushed and slaughtered before laying in for a hard defense of the city. Spartan soldiers supported by Athenian cavalry were quickly dispatched to retake the errant city. As they began preparing their camps for a long siege, the attackers were shocked to see the Corinthians charge forth from their walls and even more so at the army of Athenian exiles that simultaneously swept in from their rear. Caught between the two forces the Athenians and Spartans were decimated. Thrasybulus then turned his forces towards Athens proper. Gathering throngs of supporters from across Attica, he found the Thirty's army nearly entirely dissolved by the time he reached the city gates. With the support of the bitter citizenry, the rebels entered the city with almost no resistance. Sweeping through the streets the Thirty, their supporters, and appointed officials were seized and, in a mass showing, executed on grounds of treason.

The Ekklesia and the Boule were immediately restored and new elections were held to fill the assembly. Thrasybulus was charged by the assembly to head the restored democracy until it secured itself against its enemies.

The Neo-Delian League

Indebted from the war, stretched thin by occupation, and reeling from their defeat at Corinth, the Spartans realized they could not prevent the restoration of Athenian democracy or the independence of Corinth. Likewise, Thebes knew it alone could not face even a weakened Athens and quickly began preparing defenses for the inevitable retribution.

Indeed, with Corinth secure as an ally and a buffer between Sparta, the Athenians quickly turned their eyes north with thoughts of revenge. Thebes was unable to even slow down the advance of the vengeful Athenian forces and was quickly occupied. Dissolving all institutions of government, Athens installed an appointed dictator who answered directly to the Ekklesia.

Their eyes then turned eastward towards Smyrna, whose betrayal in the Spartan wars was not forgotten. As they had during those wars, the Athenians turned to the Persians for assistance, offering them half the lands held by Smyrna in Anatolia. Lacking support from any of its wartime allies, Smyrna soon found itself similarly occupied to Thebes. With the capture of these two major cities and their smaller vassals, Athens declared the Neo-Delian League, this time dominated by Athens by rule as well as practice.

To this day the Neo-Delian League remains securely under Athenian rule as one of the three major powers in the Hellenic world alongside Sparta and Macedonia.

Though geographically small compared to many of the world's states, Athenian influence is spread far.

MACEDON

Situated in the highlands to the north of the Greek city states, Macedonia is the birthplace of some of the most influential leaders in history. The founding Argead dynasty claimed descent from Temenus of Argos, one of the Heracleidae or Sons of Heracles, and through Heracles, direct descent from the god Zeus. Despite this divine lineage, the Macedonians have often been viewed as outsiders to the other

Hellenistic Greeks, their “barbarian” culture being decried as outright hedonistic in comparison to the epicurean ideals of the Thebans and Athenians, or the utilitarian austerity of the Spartans. For this reason, it has taken cunning diplomatic and military strategies on the part of the Macedonian rulers to survive the often-tumultuous conflicts that plague the Greek peninsula, and in the cases of Philip II and his son, Alexander the Great, conquer the entire region and beyond.

Perseids and Heracleidae

Though few today can credibly claim descent from a demi-god, many influential dynasties throughout the Greek States were indeed founded by the offspring of such famous heroes as Perseus and Heracles. Though diluted by generations of mortals, the divine blood coursing through their veins is said to grant them powers beyond their peers, with fortunes to match. Fate can be fickle, however, and though those with the blood of gods often achieve greatness in their lifetimes, sudden calamity is usually not far behind.

Alexander I

Though his later namesake, Alexander III, would certainly succeed in eclipsing his deeds, Alexander I is credited with being the first Macedonian king to compete in the Olympic Games, as well as first to earn the title of Philhellene, an honor reserved only for true Greek patriots— an especially unusual circumstance given his position as satrap to the invading Achaemenid Persians.

Early in his reign, Alexander I desired to see and be seen by his Greek neighbors, taking advantage of a relative lull in the Greek and Persian hostilities to organize a journey across the southern territories. Stopping at each of the city states in his

path, Alexander made a sacrifice to the relevant god of every temple he visited before finally arriving at Olympia, where he formally requested to compete in the games.

A skilled athlete, the Macedonian king made quick work of the entry trials and was set to run the opening footrace when several rival competitors issued a challenge to his eligibility: as a foreigner, he had no right to compete in the Olympic Games. As soon as the judges, known as hellanodikai, were assembled to make a decision, Alexander, having prepared for just such a challenge, made his case. He described how his ancestor, Perdiccas, himself a descendent of Temenus, had come to dwell in the upper reaches of Macedonia— to deny his Hellenistic origins was to deny the Greek nature of Heracles himself.

Satisfied with Alexander’s speech, the hellanodikai agreed to allow him to compete, and the games began with a swift victory for the Macedonian king. Alexander impressed many that day, and though some still viewed him as a barbarian, none could deny his prowess. When it came time for the Persians to renew their conquest, it would be these rekindled Greek connections that spurred Alexander to change the course of the war.

As Xerxes I marched through Greece, Alexander fulfilled his obligation as satrap, mustering a force of Macedonian warriors and joining the Persians as they entered Thessaly. Determined to play both sides of the conflict, Alexander rode ahead of Xerxes’ host and met in secret with the Greek defenders, alerting them to a plan to encircle them that would surely have caught them unprepared.

In this manner, Alexander continued to aid the Greeks whenever possible, with Xerxes’ confidence in his loyalty blinding him to the truth of his enemies’ often miraculous ability to foresee his battle strategies. Believing Greek augury to blame for his recent misfortune, Xerxes set his sights on Delphi, sending General Mardonius, fresh from the sacking of Athens, to punish the oracles there. Realizing it was his own schemes that now threatened Delphi, Alexander again rode ahead to meet with the Greeks, this time enlisting the Spartans in a preemptive ambush.

Having expected little resistance from the typically passive oracles, Mardonius was surprised and overwhelmed by the Spartan forces that rose to meet him. Through this and subsequent Persian defeats, Xerxes was compelled to retreat, abandoning his conquest of Greece to focus on growing unrest in Babylon. Though Xerxes may have intended to one day return and complete his conquest, fate would have other plans, as Artabanus, a powerful court official and priest of Marduk would orchestrate the assassination of Xerxes and his son before seizing the throne for himself.

Philip II

Philip II, though destined for greatness, spent much of his early life in captivity. As a royal hostage, first to the Illyrians and then to the Thebans, Philip was introduced to the harsh realities of warfare and court life before he had yet reached maturity. The Thebans educated him well in matters of diplomacy and war as well as the magic inherent to his bloodline, seeing in him the potential for a powerful Macedonian ally if properly cultivated.

Shortly after his return to Macedonia Philip's elder brothers both met untimely ends at the hands of usurpers and Illyrian invaders, leaving the former hostage as regent for his infant nephew. Within a year, Philip was made king, and quickly set to work punishing those that had wronged Macedon. With sweeping and innovative military reforms, Philip set the stage for a remarkable career of conquest and expansion.

Instituting the now-famous sarissa phalanx, Philip first put his military theory to practice in defeating an Athenian expedition that had sought to take advantage of what they perceived as weakness on the part of the Macedonians. Over three thousand Athenian hoplites were killed with remarkably few Macedonian casualties, a resounding testament to the effectiveness of the new formation.

Turning now to the Illyrians that had slain his brother, Philip once again demonstrated the dominance of the sarissa phalanx, defeating a host of 7,000 and securing the alliances of the neighboring tribes that had been harassed by the Illyrians for decades. Not content to simply watch his strategy unfold from the sidelines, Philip waded into battle alongside his infantry, bolstering their efforts with his magic and strength at arms.

This habit of personally participating in each combat would prove invaluable for the morale of his troops, but was not without risk. During his conquest of Thrace an arrow claimed his right eye, an injury that earned him the moniker "Philip One Eye" for the rest of his life.

Philip, following the trend set by Alexander I, would compete in numerous Olympic Games, claiming victory over three of them even as he accelerated the Macedonian expansion. Horse-racing was his specialty, with his conquest of Thessaly providing some of the best horses in the known world.

Philip took many wives over the course of his reign, with Phillina and Nicesipolis of Thessaly, Audata of Illyria, and Meda of Odessa as well as multiple Scythian and Thracian princesses serving as primarily politically-motivated marriages. Most famous of these, however was Olympias of Epirus, a descendent of Achilles and mother of Alexander the Great. A devout follower of Dionysus, Olympias was inducted in numerous mystery cults and renowned for her ability to control serpents.



The Panhellenic Games

The Olympic Games are only one of four tournament-festivals that comprise the Panhellenic Games, each honoring a different deity. The Pythian Games (which honor Apollo) are held at Delphi, with a focus on archery and chariot races. The Nemean Games, commemorating Heracles and his defeat of the Nemean lion, focus primarily on wrestling and boxing. In Sicyon, the Isthmian Games honor Poseidon with horse racing and swimming. Dedicated to Zeus, the Olympic Games' pentathlon incorporates the long jump, discus, javelin, a footrace, and finally culminates in a wrestling match for the final prize. Where previously the games were open only to native-born Greeks, Roman influence has ensured that these once strict rules have slowly begun to relax, with athletes from around the world traveling for a chance to compete and prove themselves.

Even as Philip succeeded in unifying all of Greece, (save for the notable exception of Sparta) he set his eye on yet loftier goals. The Achaemenid Persians, having once conquered much of the territory he now controlled, were a tempting prize, but one which would require the full support of his allies and vassals to claim.

Philip began to consolidate power in advance of his invasion of Asia Minor, making a show of confidence in his position by touring the extent of the territories of the Hellenic League with minimal retinue. At the marriage of one of his daughters he reduced his bodyguard considerably and appeared weaponless before the crowd, but in attempting to put at ease the assembled Greek envoys, Philip invited disaster. One of the few remaining bodyguards, Pausanias, approached Philip from behind and impaled him through the chest before attempting to escape.

Nearly making it to a waiting horse, the assassin was tripped by a vine before being killed by his pursuers. By, then, however, the reign of Philip II had come to an abrupt end.

Pausanias' motivations remain in question to this day, with theories ranging from a sordid love affair to a cunning plot by Olympias to ensure that her son— Alexander III— would inherit the throne. The nature of Pausanias' near-escape lends credence to the latter possibility, some claim, with the offending vine actually being one of Olympias' serpent thralls ensuring the removal of loose ends.

No matter the truth, many believed that the golden age of Macedon would die with Philip II,

his dreams of Persian conquest soon to be a distant memory. Nothing could be further from the truth, however, as Alexander the Great would pick up exactly where his father left off, eclipsing the deeds of all Macedonian rulers before or since.

Alexander the Great

From the day of his birth, Alexander III was destined for greatness. The very same day that Philip claimed his first victory at the Olympic Games, an augur approached him with news: Philip's generals had claimed victory over the Illyrians, Olympia had given birth to a son during a fierce thunderstorm, and the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus (one of the seven wonders of the world) had spontaneously burnt to the ground. Artemis, having been present at Alexander's birth, he claimed, chose to remain witness to this particularly auspicious event rather than intervene in the destruction of her greatest temple.

These portents both excited and frightened Philip, with some even claiming that Zeus himself, not Philip, was the boy's true father. A son of such potent destiny could prove a most worthy successor, but also stood the chance of overthrowing him if Philip was incautious. He chose to keep his son at arm's length, entrusting his education to the brightest minds at his disposal, including, most notably, Aristotle. In this way, he hoped to foster Alexander's power in the same manner that he had been tutored at Thebes.

By the time of Philip's assassination, Alexander

was more than prepared to take the mantle of king of Macedon. Having mastered the arts of war and statecraft, and having fought alongside his father, even saving his life, in numerous battles, the assembled Macedonian nobles proclaimed Alexander king without delay.

News of Philip's death spurred the widespread revolt of several vassal states, including Thessaly, Athens, and Thebes, but Alexander would make quick work of these opportunistic rebels. Marching his army over Mount Ossa, Alexander surprised the Thessalians from behind, forcing them into surrender without a single casualty before marching their now combined strength into the Peloponnese.

When the Athenians and Thebans saw that the Thessalians had been so easily subdued and now marched against them, they sued for peace, with Alexander issuing a full pardon on the condition that he be appointed Hegemon of the League of Corinth. Wasting no time, Alexander spoke before his assembled subjects, urging them onwards towards victory over the very Persians that had once attempted to subjugate Greece.

Alexander's Asian campaign proved a resounding success, with victory after victory demonstrating his shrewd battle strategy as well as once again vindicating the effectiveness of his father's sarissa phalanx. In Phrygia, Alexander met his first major obstacle—the Mercenary King, Memnon of Rhodes. Though Greek by birth, Memnon was a loyal servant of the Achaemenid Empire, and after his victory over the forces of Philip II's tentative invasion force, was appointed commander of the western satrapies by Darius III.

Having already tested the mettle of the Macedonians, Memnon urged king Darius to engage in a strategy of scorched earth; By scouring the lands that Alexander was to conquer, they could deprive the invaders of the means to supply their armies. Darius refused, however, trusting that Memnon would prove victorious (having already defeated a Macedonian invasion once before) without resorting to such desperate measures.

World Walker

Though perhaps the most famous Greek to march east, Alexander is far from the only one. Ja'sharra of Lesbos is today the greatest living Greek explorer, having traveled from Roman Britannia to the far reaches of China.

Ja'sharra
of Lesbos



The Mercenary King made excellent use of Persian naval superiority, repelling an Athenian incursion even as Alexander made landfall. Hoping to force Alexander back to Macedonia with a counter-invasion, Memnon sent Persian envoys to several potential Greek belligerents, including Sparta, and claimed multiple Greek islands as a staging ground. On the island of Lesbos, however, Memnon's schemes were cut short when he was killed at the battle of Mytilene, his counter-invasion of Greece dying with him.

After defeating the remaining Persian defenders in Phrygia, Alexander was met with a strange challenge: the Gordian Knot—a complicated rope puzzle said to be nearly impossible to solve. As prophecy would have it, the man to defeat the Gordian Knot would become king of not only Phrygia, but the whole of Asia as well. Accounts differ as to the means by which Alexander defeated the Knot, with some claiming that his training under Aristotle proved invaluable. Others, however, say that upon being presented with the puzzle, Alexander simply cut the entangled rope with his sword and declared it defeated.

In any event, the prophecy would prove true, as Alexander proceeded to swiftly conquer the Levant, Egypt, and Babylonia. Darius III fled from Alexander's advance, but was soon held captive by the very vassals from whom he sought aid. Bessus the Bactrian saw a chance at glory, first making demands of Alexander for Darius' return before executing the Achaemenid king when he refused to negotiate. As Bessus declared himself king, Alexander recovered the body of Darius, making a show of burying the executed ruler at Babylon before hunting down the usurper.

Thus, Alexander succeeded in securing not just the subjugation of the Persians, but their admiration and loyalty as well. With Bessus finally dealt with by Ptolemy, (a close companion of Alexander's who would go on to found the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt) Alexander continued his conquest eastward into the Indian subcontinent. With the defeat of the Achaemenids, Alexander the Great had succeeded in fulfilling the grand vision of his father, but he, nor his fanatically

loyal followers were content. So long as there remained lands to conquer, Alexander would oblige.

The Wars of the Diadochi

Despite never being defeated in battle, Alexander met his sudden and untimely demise after returning to Babylon, with poison being a distinctly probable cause. Such was the disarray caused by his death that the resulting conflict shattered the Macedonian Empire, with each of his companions carving out a swathe of territory for their own. In the end, each of Alexander's heirs lay dead, with only Seleucus and Ptolemy creating lasting successor states.

The Seleucid Empire would thrive for nearly three centuries before being dismantled by the Arsacid Parthians, while Ptolemy's descendants still rule as Pharaohs of Egypt.

Though Macedon may not control the vast territory it once held under Alexander, the kingdom still maintains a degree of autonomy through frequent tribute and diplomacy with Rome. Currently extending from Epirus in the west to Thrace in the east, the Macedonians remain somewhat nostalgic for the days of centuries past. The current "king," if he can indeed be called such, styles himself Philip VI, though his claim to that title is somewhat dubious.

Having stood before the Roman senate with a scroll supposedly scribed by Perseus himself, the young self-styled monarch proclaimed that the throne of Macedon was his birthright. The senate, unimpressed by his claim, elected to exile him to Sardinia, but having escaped his captors, he now wanders the Greek world in hopes of garnering the support he needs to reclaim what he believes is rightfully his.



Illyria

Capital

Salona (120,000)

Major Cities

Risinium (100,000), Pota (55,000),
Singidunum (32,000)

Leader

Princess Nebra

East of Rome across the Adriatic Sea lies a land bounded by the Balkans and the Danube known as Illyria. The tribes and kingdoms of this region, collectively called the Illyrians, are renowned for their skilled warriors and sailors, with a fierce reputation for piracy throughout the Mediterranean. Their naval power once rivaled Rome's, and though they now find themselves subject to Roman rule, recent rebellion has demonstrated once again that the Illyrians are not so easily cowed.

Cadmus and Illyrius

A Phoenician prince and the founder of Thebes, the hero Cadmus was a demi-god by nature of his grandfather, Poseidon. Two millennia ago, Cadmus, renowned throughout Greece for his heroic exploits, sought to retire from his life of adventure alongside his wife, the goddess Harmonia. Finally settling in the land of Enchele to the north of Macedonia, Cadmus and Harmonia had four daughters and two sons, the youngest of which—Illyrius— would come to rule the lands west of the Danube. The sons of Illyrius would each found tribes of their own, encouraged by their father to value strength and self-reliance. Aiding one another in times of foreign conflict, but otherwise rivals, the brothers and their descendants would adopt the sea-faring ways of their Phoenician grandfather, becoming expert sailors and shipwrights.

Those tribes that settled along the Adriatic coast had great difficulty establishing much in the way of agriculture, finding little fertile ground amongst the sand and rocky terrain. Fishing became a necessity, further emphasizing the importance of Illyrian naval dominance and, eventually, piracy.

The Pirate Queen

Over two centuries ago, the majority of the Illyrian tribes were united for the first time under a king— Agron of the Ardiaei. Under Agron, the Ardiaei tribe had risen as the strongest both on land and at sea, and the other Illyrian chieftains well understood the benefits of an alliance, with the few dissenters quickly defeated and their territories annexed.

The Curse of Apollo

When several of the Illyrian tribes sought to raid the Pythian Oracle at Delphi, they experienced firsthand the wrath of its founder and protector, Apollo. Chief among them, the Autariatae, were once deemed the strongest of the tribes, with a warrior culture that had no room for weakness. When a series of plagues spread among all those that participated in the raid of Delphi, the Autariatae were disproportionately affected, as their unforgiving dictates compelled them to cull any who fell sick, leaving them vulnerable to attacks from their rivals, including the Celtic Cimbri. Thus, without firing a single radiant arrow from his mighty bow, Apollo destroyed those that dared desecrate his temple.

Cadmus, though old, survived well into the reign of Illyrius, but soon fell victim to Apollo's plague. Weakened and with Harmonia at his side, Cadmus beseeched Apollo to spare his son's people, caring little for his own wellbeing. Apollo could no more end the plague than he could unfire an arrow, but felt pity for Cadmus, whom he knew to be a good man. Transforming him into an immortal serpent, Apollo brought Cadmus to the Elysian Fields, where he dwells with Harmonia to this day.



To the south, the Macedonians saw the strength of the Illyrians as an opportunity, and Philip V successfully negotiated their support as mercenaries in their ongoing war with the Aetolians. One hundred Illyrian ships delivered Agron's mercenary forces to Medion, where they took the defending Aetolians by surprise and quickly claimed the high ground. Descending from the hill, the Illyrians massacred the remaining Aetolians and wasted no time in looting as much as they could carry before escaping back to the sea.

News of the shocking Illyrian victory spread quickly throughout Greece, and King Agron was overjoyed. Ordering a massive feast in celebration, Agron is said to have cavorted himself so raucously that he partied himself to death before the victorious army could even arrive. His wife, Queen

Teuta, refused to cancel the victory celebrations even as she buried her husband, insisting that the returning army not be denied their king's final feast.

Queen Teuta was well loved by her people. A skilled warrior and sailor in her own right, she had earned the respect of the Illyrians long before she ever took the throne. Now as their ruler, she bolstered the mercenary and pirate fleets, ordering the construction of hundreds of new vessels to support a new era of warfare and piracy.

The burgeoning trade fleets of Rome and Greece made lucrative targets for Illyrian pirates throughout the Mediterranean, and many an overladen vessel fell victim to their depredations. In Rome, the senate was flooded with petitions by incensed merchant captains who demanded

retribution, but the Roman navy was too preoccupied with the ongoing conflict with the Carthaginians to meaningfully intervene.

Roman inaction had its limits, however, and as the Punic War drew to a close a particularly brazen act on behalf of The Pirate Queen would prove the final straw.

When the city of Phoenike— the most prosperous trade hub in Epirus— was taken in a daring Illyrian raid, Queen Teuta saw an opportunity for further expansion of her pirate enterprise. Fortifying the city against attempts to reclaim it by land, she demanded an unprecedented ransom for the end of the Illyrian occupation while

simultaneously using the city's extensive port as a staging ground for further sea raids.

By the time the ransom had been paid and the Illyrians departed, trade throughout the Mediterranean had been disrupted so heavily that Rome finally felt compelled to act. As the fleet was prepared, two envoys were sent to the Ardiaei to attempt a diplomatic intervention. Queen Teuta, accepting an audience with the Romans, quickly grew irritated as they demanded an end to Illyrian piracy and reparations for the damages sustained.

It was against Illyrian custom for a ruler to hinder the raiding habits of private individuals, she claimed, to which the envoy replied that it was a Roman custom to publicly punish the perpetrators

Illyrian Gods

For most of Illyrian history, the various regional tribes have been a divided people, with intense rivalries boiling over into open conflict and yet further division. This is reflected in the Illyrian religion, as individual tribes rarely worship an entire pantheon, instead favoring certain regional deities and rejecting others in a piecemeal fashion.

Though each tribe typically chooses a single patron deity (local river and forest gods, for instance) there is usually a good deal of religious overlap between neighbors, with tribal alliances often forming along these lines. As the spread of foreign religion has become more prominent, some tribes have adopted the worship of Celtic, Greco-Roman, and Sumero-Babylonian deities, but this rarely supercedes the worship of more traditional Illyrian deities.

Redon— Patron deity of the Ilyrii tribe and the city of Lissos, Redon is a god of the sea, travelers, and the art of sailing. Some credit Redon with introducing the first sailing vessels to the early tribes, with shrines and coinage depicting his image common among the Daorsi, Labeates, and Ardiaei.

Medaurus— God of war, thrown weapons, and horsemanship as well as patron deity of Rhizon, Medaurus is most often depicted as riding an immense horse and wielding a javelin. Some Romans of the equestrian order have taken to collecting charms of Medaurus during the Illyrian occupation, with small shrines to the horse god (as well as the Celtic horse goddess, Epona) beginning to appear in the capital.

Nebra— Goddess of mist and tempestuous storms, Nebra is a mysterious deity claimed by no single tribe, but known to all Illyrian sailors. Popular with smugglers and pirates, offerings to Nebra are most often hurled into the sea in the hope of claiming fair weather for the faithful and a watery grave for those foolish enough to pursue a vessel with her blessing.

Dracon and Dracaena— Dardanian serpent gods that mirror the tale of Cadmus and Harmonia, these divine lovers are most often depicted as a pair of intertwined winged serpents. They represent unbreakable vows and the concept of eternity and immortality.

Thana— A forest and mountain goddess known for her entourage of divine, golden-horned rams and nymph attendants. Hunters and trappers frequently beseech Thana for aid in advance of pursuing their quarry, leaving a portion of their bounty at forest shrines that can be found throughout regions that worship her.

of private wrongs. The envoys, unable to reach a compromise, were escorted back to their ship. It remains unclear if the events that followed were orchestrated by Teuta, but during their return voyage the envoys' ship was attacked by pirates. One of the envoys (notably the one who had traded quips with the Queen) was killed in the ensuing boarding action, but the remaining envoy addressed the Roman senate after his vessel limped home.

The murder of a Roman envoy was more than enough to mobilize the navy and several legions against the Illyrians and their Pirate Queen, though even as Rome prepared for their first Adriatic invasion, Teuta was busy claiming Greek islands. Corfu, one such island, was home to the city of Corcyra, an excellent staging ground for Illyrian piracy that Teuta placed under the control of Demetrius of Pharos, a skilled general who had faithfully served King Agron.

Demetrius, however, had no intention to defend Corcyra against the encroaching Roman assault, instead arranging a deal with the Roman consul to betray his Queen and allow Corfu to become a Roman protectorate on the condition that the Romans would not harm Agron's son, who remained too young to inherit the Illyrian throne. In return, Demetrius was allowed to remain governor of the island, and, should the Romans succeed in defeating Teuta, he would be named regent until the young prince came of age. With the Pirate Queen's best general and naval staging ground turned against her, Teuta quickly found herself under assault as the Roman legions made landfall, wisely electing to avoid engaging the Illyrians at sea. Though they put up a fierce resistance, the allied tribes failed to halt the Roman advance, finally leaving The Pirate Queen's Ardiaei alone to face the invaders. As coastal towns were one by one occupied and transformed into Roman protectorates, the remaining Illyrian pirates found it increasingly difficult to find safe harbor, forcing many to give up their trade with no way to make use of their ill-gotten gains.

Though Teuta herself remained too well defended at Reseneum to risk a direct assault, she could see that the harm to her people was becoming too great to continue. After two years of devastating conflict, The Pirate Queen finally agreed to abdicate her position, signing a Roman treaty that greatly limited the size of Illyrian fleets and placed her stepson on the throne. True to their word, the Romans installed Demetrius as regent of the newly annexed territory, a position he cemented in the marriage of Agron's first wife, Tritueta.

Teuta's final fate is unknown, though apocryphal tales of her captaining a ship of her own throughout the Mediterranean abound. Unsanctioned Illyrian piracy, though certainly diminished, would continue throughout Demetrius' regency, and the anarchic spirit of Teuta's pirate empire would serve as precedent for the rebellions to come. Demetrius himself would engage in a spirited (albeit short-lived) resistance to Roman rule before fleeing to Macedonia, where he became a friend and advisor to Philip V.



The Illyrian Revolt

Since its annexation, the Roman province of Illyria has provided the Roman legions with auxiliary troops, often through brutal methods of forced recruitment. Over the last two centuries, sporadic Illyrian piracy has continued to be a thorn in the side of Mediterranean trade, with harsh punishments meted out to the responsible tribes by their Roman overlords. Most recently, however, these disparate tribes united for the first time since the days of Agron, staging a revolt that threatened to destabilize Roman control of the entire region.

As the fires of rebellion have begun to burn in Rome's more far-flung territories, the typically unrivaled legions have struggled to contain the growing animosity towards the Empire's control. Preoccupied in Britannia and still reeling from the unmitigated disaster at the Battle of Teutoburg Forest, the forces of Rome are spread thin, with many seeking to take advantage of their perceived weakness.

When Rome sought to institute a massive forced-recruitment effort within Illyria to support its beleaguered troops in Germania, the freshly equipped tribal auxiliaries turned against their Roman counterparts, capturing numerous officers and instigating a full-scale revolt in the neighboring villages.

With each passing day more tribes join the rebel forces, striking at Rome's less fortified positions within Illyria and vanishing into the forests and swamps before the superior forces of the legions can be brought to bear.

Supporting these rebels is a network of smugglers and pirates, regularly ferrying rebel forces and supplies as necessary in the fight for Illyrian independence.

At the head of this tribal alliance is the charismatic pirate captain, Nebra. Named for the Illyrian goddess of mist and storms, Nebra has styled herself as heir to the Pirate Queen's legacy and has vowed to permanently shatter the yoke of

Roman oppression. Dubbed the Pirate Princess by her followers and having evaded all attempts to capture or assassinate her, Nebra's legend only grows as she navigates a complex web of tribal rivalries, working tirelessly to remind unruly chieftains of their common foe.

A firm believer in leading by example, the Pirate Princess has personally pillaged and plundered countless Roman positions and ships, artfully demonstrating that the legions, though powerful, are neither invincible nor inexhaustible. Though many tribes remain too fearful or too proud to put their differences aside, each successful raid and rebel victory brings more warriors and sailors to her cause.

Rumors abound of Nebra's connection to her divine namesake, with some going so far as to claim that the goddess's blood flows through her veins. The truth of these matters is unclear, but many a Roman sailor can attest to the uncanny timing with which a sudden change in the weather or the appearance of an impenetrable mist allowed the Pirate Princess to slip through their fingers.

Though Nebra's efforts to unite the remaining clans has thus far been largely successful, it remains to be seen if the Illyrians can maintain their revolt in the face of the might of Rome. Even now, the senate discusses the ongoing conflict, with rumors of over a dozen legions being redirected from Germania. What is clear, however, is that the rebellious Illyrian spirit will always refuse to be contained, no matter the opposition.



Kush

Capital

Napata (200,000)

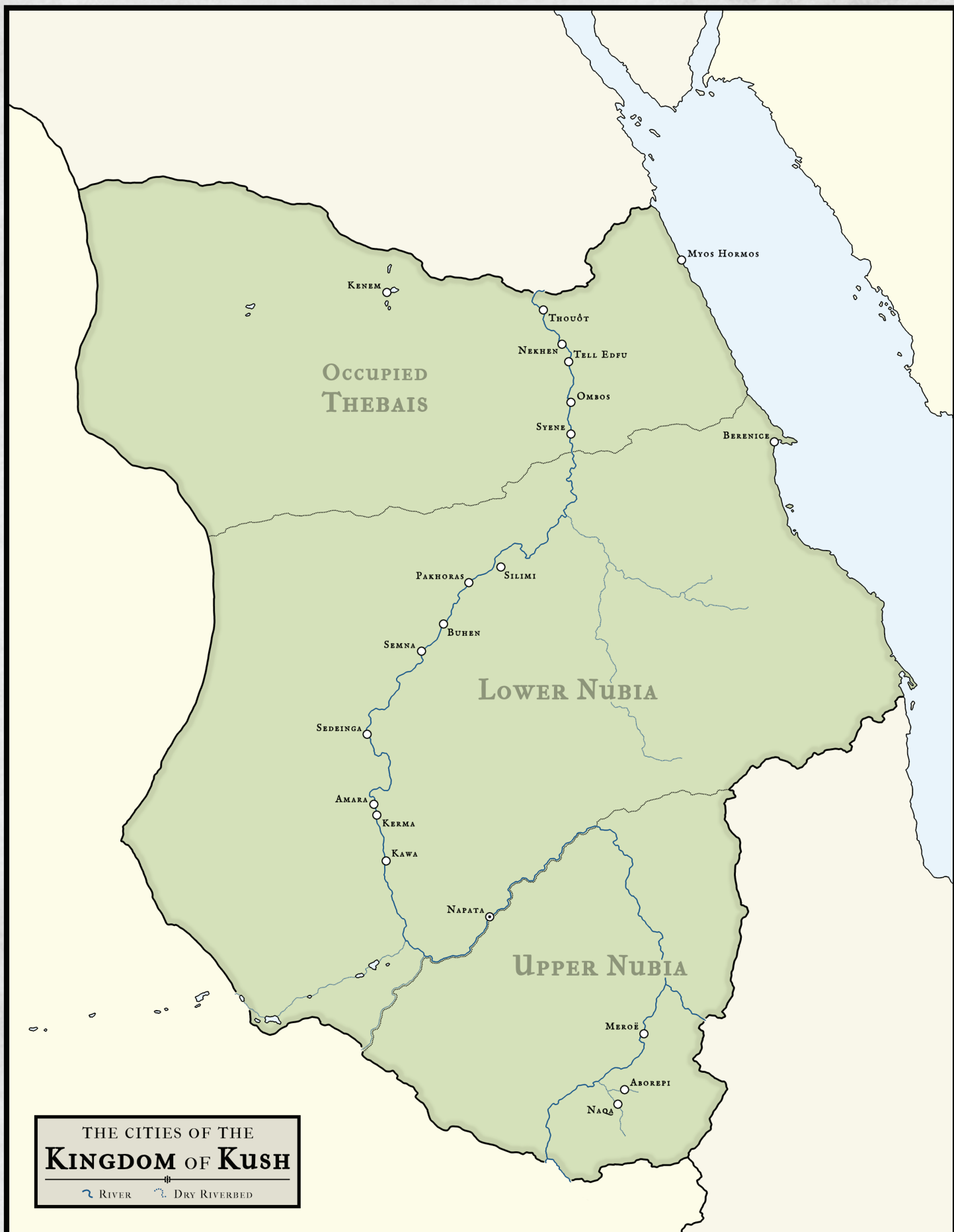
Major Cities (Kush): Kerma
(100,000) Meroe (75,000)

Major Cities

(Upper Egypt): Naqada (75,000)
Nekhen (100,000)

Leader

Queen Amanirenas



OCCUPIED
THEBAÏS

LOWER NUBIA

UPPER NUBIA

THE CITIES OF THE
KINGDOM OF KUSH

— RIVER

— DRY RIVERBED

KENEM

THOUÔT

NEKHEN

TELL EDFU

OMBOS

SYENE

BERENICE

MYOS HORMOS

PAKHORAS

SILIMI

BUHEN

SEMNA

SEDEINGA

AMARA

KERMA

KAWA

NAPATA

MEROË

ABOREPI

NAQA

The Kingdom of Kush is a mid-sized kingdom south of Upper Egypt that has over the millennia warred with, been a vassal of and even ruled over their northern neighbors.

Devout followers of the Egyptian Pantheon, Kush is home to a large number of massive temples and monuments to the Gods. No god is so revered within the kingdom as Amun-Ra with two of the three most prominent temples to his worship residing in Napata and Meroe.

Kush is an absolute monarchy, currently ruled by Queen Amanirenas. Her most prominent advisor is the exiled God's Wife of Amun with whom she shares a common dynastic ancestor, Pankhy I.

Kush is currently engaged in a large-scale war with Egypt after having made legal claims on and invading Upper Egypt. Though they control roughly two-thirds of the territory, the jewel, Thebes, remains under the control of Pharaoh Lysandra of Lower Egypt.



Pankhy I

Kingdom of Kerma

Little knowledge remains of the ancient Kingdom of Kerma, even among its own descendants.

What is known is that at its height the Kermite Kingdom rivaled the combined might of Lower and Upper Egypt in size and power. The former capital, Kerma, once also rivaled Thebes in population. Still a major commercial hub, the city is a shell of what it was millennia ago and few pre-Egyptian structures remain intact. Those that do are considered holy and are protected fiercely by the current Kushites. Most important among these is the Temple of Amun, once the head temple for the entire Kingdom of Kerma's religion, though

now only the third largest temple to Amun after Napata and Thebes.

Kermite conflict with Egypt is recorded nearly as far back as records go. However, both the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties report large scale military clashes across the borders of Upper Egypt and Kerma. Many powerful fortifications were constructed along the borders during this period in response to Egypt's failure to annex the southern state. Though several lesser deities managed to be absorbed into the Egyptian Pantheon, most of their leading gods were killed by the Egyptians prior to Amun's surrender.

The Fortifications of Neuserre

Built along the old border of Upper Egypt and what is now referred to as Kush, from the Fifth to the Seventeenth Dynasties these fortifications were seen as wall against southern invasion. From the Eighteenth to the Twenty-Fourth, they were reminders that while Kush may be under Egyptian Rule, they were still not fully trusted. Under the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty however, control of these fortifications was handed over to the Viceroy of Kush. Today they still remain in the control of the Kush royal family and proved invaluable in the recent Kush incursion into Upper Egypt.

It was with the surrender of the Kermite sun deity, now known as the Egyptian deity Amun, that the Pantheon finally broke. With most of their gods dead and the Pantheon officially disbanded by Amun, the priests, clerics and paladins of Kerma found their magicks quickly withered away.

Amun himself was not slain however, and in exchange for his recognition of Ra as the true Sun God, he was allowed to be absorbed into the Pantheon, becoming one of its most important gods. Such did Amun's worship spread that for a brief period during the New Kingdom he even found himself at the head of the Pantheon, much to the Twenty-Fifth dynasty's joy.

From the Eighteenth to the Twenty-Fourth Dynasties the Kingdom of Kerma remained an Egyptian colony, controlled by an appointed Viceroy — the first of whom was Pharaoh Montuhotep's son Iufni — the Kermite were subject to heavy suppression of their native culture and large scale Egyptification took place across the realm.

The Kermite for their part, even with their Pantheon broken, would not be fully content to serve as Egyptian vassals. Regular rebellions broke out during the first centuries, often led by a minor deity that had both survived and refused absorption into the Egyptian Pantheon.

It is believed that several of these minor deities may still be alive to this day. Weakened and prayed to only in private by a few, these gods bide their time in hopes of one day restoring their own Pantheon across Kush, with or without Amun.

Beginning around the time of the Twenty-First Dynasty, Egyptian records begin referring to the lands of Kerma as Kush, and its people as Kushites. This shift seems to have occurred alongside the Egyptification of the native Kermite. It was also during this reign that the title Viceroy began to find itself successively given to members of the native Kushite elite.

The Twenty-Fifth Dynasty

It was during the New Kingdom, under the short-lived reign of the Twenty-Fourth Dynasty, — whose name, Tefnakht, was taken from their founder — that the Kushites would see their chance to seize power. By this time the former Kermite were fully integrated into Egyptian society and held several of the most important roles in the Egyptian religion including the High Priest of Amun.

When the second ruler of the Twenty-Fourth dynasty, Bakenranef, died he left no living heir, only a pregnant wife. This power vacuum caused a brief period of chaos within the otherwise stable New Kingdom period. Across Egypt various powers both spiritual and military jockeyed for control. Though a son would be born after his death, it was too late to stop the warring factions to which he became no more than a pawn.

During the previous two Dynasties the power of Amun and his cult had grown considerably across Egyptian society. So it was that when Kushite Viceroy Kashta entered Upper Egypt and was declared Pharaoh by the High Priest of Amun at Thebes, the people quickly and happily accepted this new state of order.

Kashta's daughter Ameniridis would also become the first Kushite to hold the title God's Wife of Amun which had been the highest-

ranking position within the cult of Amun until the Egyptian conquests — since Amun had been absorbed into the Pantheon. Though the High priest of Amun would continue to be an important position, it has been entirely superseded in standing by the God's Wife of Amun who rules the cult from the temple at Thebes.

So important and trusted was this position that many God's Wives of Amun during the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty also held the title Regent of Thebes, which allowed them to manage the territories north of Kush in the Pharaoh's name. To this day the women of the Pankhy have held the title without interruption.

Though Thebes was the most populous city and Kerma the historic site of the Cult of Amun Kashta decided to make his capital and be crowned in Napata, which had served as capital of the Kingdom and Viceroyalty since the Egyptian annexation. So, the tradition was set and all following members of the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty would travel to Napata with the God's Wife of Amun to be crowned.

Kashta would rule for the next thirty years as King of Kush and Upper Egypt though his attempts to bring Lower Egypt under his control would be frustrated throughout his life. It would be Kashta's son, Pankhy, who would finally conquer the north and reunite the realm from Lower Egypt to Kush. It was also through Pankhy that the Dynasty gained the family name it still uses to this day.

His rule was solidified when Bakenranef's son swore loyalty to the Pankhy Dynasty in exchange for his life and the title Lord of Memphis. This event would set a precedent of mercy between the Tefnakht and Pankhy families that lasted a millennium.

It was during the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty's rule that the first new pyramids built in millennia would rise along the Nile. These monuments represented the largest investments in construction since the reign of Pharaoh Tausret whose grand mausoleum at Karnak still stands as one of the most impressive pieces of Egyptian construction and engineering.

The most important of these being the Grand Pyramid of Napata, before which the Pharaohs would be crowned.

Ra's Revenge

Though most the Egyptian deities accepted the transition of Amun to head of the Pantheon, (it had shifted before after all) Ra was deeply humiliated to be placed below a god that he himself had subjugated long in the past and vowed to see this change undone quickly.

Ra enlisted the aid of his most trusted companion, Hathor, who often rode the great Solar Barge at his side. Ra approached Hathor and confided in her that he needed assistance only she could offer, but that he could not tell her the exact circumstances yet. Hathor, with her great trust in Ra, agreed to help in any way she could. In that moment Ra placed a curse upon Hathor, one that would put her into an endless blood rage against Amun and his followers while overriding her typically caring personality. Then, with a wave of his hand, he sent her to the central chamber of a small temple to Amun on the outskirts of Thebes.

Hathor's appearance sparked great excitement among the priests, most of who had never witnessed one of the gods in person before. A priestess of Amun approached manifested deity and asked her bidding. Hathor considered this for a moment before answering with one word, "Death." A brief murmur swept through the assembled priests quickly replaced with terrified screams as Hathor swiftly and easily tore the head from the kneeling priestess. Hathor then began a rampage through Thebes, attacking all of the shrines and temples to Amun, slaughtering the priests and desecrating the grounds upon which they were built.

Though they attempted to defend themselves even the most powerful priests could not hope to stand before the might of a fully manifested deity, much less one further empowering off the bloody slaughter. Soldier and civilian alike fled her approach and when she finally reached the plaza below the Great Temple of Thebes, she found no resistance left between her and her prize.

Entering the Temple Hathor found the Pharaoh, High priest of Amun and the Gods Wife of Amun within the central chamber. Here these strongest of mortals decided they would make their stand. But even within the halls of Amun their powers could not match Hathor's and the High Priest of Amun

was quickly killed.

It was then that Amun appeared between Hathor and the Pharaoh. His typically calm demeanor replaced with one of fury and confusion. He demanded to know why Hathor had begun this slaughter but her only response was the one she gave to the priests previously “Death” before continuing her assault.

Though Amun was, under typical circumstances, more powerful than Hathor, the curse of Ra combined with her many blood sacrifices had greatly empowered her and the loss of so many of his priests in Thebes had noticeably weakened him.

Despite their combined power, the Pharaoh and the Gods Wife of Amun both fell in the course of the battle, their deaths only further empowering the raging Hathor and further weakening the already backfooting Amun. Once more Amun demanded to know why Hathor had betrayed him but he went unanswered as Hathor used the moment to deliver a crippling strike.

So it was that Hathor dragged the badly beaten Amun to the steps of the Temple of Thebes and there, before the massed crowds of the city, cast his broken body down.

It was in this moment the sky turned red and blinding light enveloped the Temple steps. When it cleared Ra was there at the base of the steps, standing above the broken Amun, looking up at Hathor. Turning to Amun and speaking with feigned fear he stated that even side-by-side they could not defeat Hathor and that their only chance was to permanently combine their powers: for Ra to absorb Amun. Realizing Hathor may destroy everything they had built and not knowing of Ra’s masterminding of the situation, Amun agreed and allows Ra to absorb him with no fight. Though stoic outwardly Ra was jubilant inside, knowing he had not only won, but that he would be remembered by the people as the one who saved them when Amun alone could not. Placing one hand on Amun’s chest Ra offered a brief incantation before, in a flash of light, Amun was gone and Amun-Ra was born.

It was then Ra did what he could have at any moment and with a snap of his finger the blood curse was broken and a confused and exhausted Hathor collapsed at the top of the steps. Ascending

the steps, he picked her up and turned to the people of Thebes and announced that they were now safe, the raging Hathor had been stopped and the combined might of Amun-Ra would ensure that such horrors never again befell the people of Egypt and Kush.

In the days that followed Amun-Ra would go about ensuring his continued rule. Merging the priesthoods of Ra and Amun, with the former Ra priests at the head. During this time power would shift away from the God’s Wife of Amun-Ra and back into hands of the High Priest of Amun-Ra. He also summoned the Lords of Memphis, and declared them the new Pharaohs of the united Egypt. What would be done with the Pankhy Amun-Ra would leave to the new rulers.

Though their dynasty no longer controlled the breadth of Egypt the Pankhy would not, as so many before had, cease to exist. Instead, they would continue to rule as the Kings and Queens of Kush, direct vassals to the Pharaoh of Upper and Lower Egypt. Knowing that ceaseless rebellions would plague his rule should he try to assume direct control of Kush post Twenty-Fifth dynasty, Pharaoh Psamtik I — a direct descendant of Pharaoh Bakenranef — offered the last son of the old Pharaoh to bow down and swear fealty in exchange for his life and the Kush Throne.

Though Amun-Ra was hesitant, he allowed this after witnessing the Kushite’s full embrace of himself as the unified Amun-Ra. He knew that any future issues this mercy may cause would be for the mortals to deal with, his place had been secured in Egypt and Kush.



The Twenty-Sixth Dynasty

Though the appointment of a Pankhy would pacify Kush for the time being. It also lay the foundation for the current unrest in Egypt, undoing centuries of Egyptification and returning a sense of identity and independence to the former Kermite. Psamtik I felt honor-bound to do this however, as the Pankhy had refused to wipe out his family line even as many had advised them to in case this very situation was to arise.

Things would not remain entirely peaceful even then however, as Psamtik I's grandson, Psamtik II would, in his narcissism and fear, begin destroying many of the monuments and Victory Stela constructed during the reign of the previous Dynasty. Many believe he was jealous of the grand structures and great victories that had gone unreplicated during his own Dynasty's rule and feared the people might rally behind a return of the Pankhy to power. This culminated in his expelling the Pankhy God's Wife of Amun-Ra from Thebes and invading Kush.

Psamtik II's army was far larger than what the Kushites could muster but still suffered great attrition from the hit and run tactics of the Nubian Archers. Horses, fairly new to Kush, proved invaluable in allowing the archers to strike and retreat with few casualties.

Annoying as these attacks were, they were unable to halt the advance of the Egyptian army deeper into Kush. As they marched down the river, city after city fell and the monuments built by the Twenty-Fifth were razed one by one.

Though Psamtik II was successful in destroying many great monuments built across Upper and Lower Egypt, his true prize, the Grand Pyramid of Napata, would survive due to the intervention of King Aspelta, known as the Archer King.

As the massed Egyptian Army set in for a siege outside Napata, Psamtik II began a grand show before his assembled vassals to demand the surrender of Napata and the handover of the Pankhy family. Knowing that allowing a siege would only end in defeat, Aspelta realized there may be another way to defeat the Pharaoh.

Ascending to the top of the Grand Pyramid Aspelta took aim and loosed a single arrow towards the massed Egyptian army gathered outside the

walls. The arrow flew true and there before his generals, high priests and most important vassals, Pharaoh Psamtik II had the combined crown of Upper and Lower Egypt knocked from his head. Though he survived the arrow, Psamtik II realized immediately that the gods had made their will known and that he had lost.

As quickly as it had swept into Kush the Egyptian army dissipated and Psamtik II became a prisoner of his own vassal, the Archer King. Aspelta would send a summons northward, demanding the crown prince, Apries, ride south to answer for his father's crimes.

Apries, a very different man from his father, did so and arrived at the gates of Napata with few soldiers and many gifts. Here he prostrated himself before Aspelta and begged mercy for his father. Taken aback by Apries' humility and reminded of the mercy his own family was shown at the hands of Psamtik I, Aspelta agreed to allow Psamtik II to live, but only on three conditions; Apries would agree to send Psamtik II into permanent exile, would recognize The Fortifications of Neuserre and all lands south of them as a fully autonomous Kingdom of Kush — who would pay a mere pittance in taxes — and would allow the Pankhy born Gods Wife of Amun-Ra to continue as the religious leader of Thebes.

Apries agreed to this arrangement and Aspelta's daughter, the current God's Wife of Amun-Ra, emerged from the Grand Pyramid holding the double crown of Egypt. There, before the Grand Pyramid, and with his father in attendance, Apries became the first and only non-Kushite Pharaoh to be crowned both by the God's Wife of Amun-Ra and in Napata.

The Egyptian Civil War

With the Greco-Roman conquests of the north, it came to be that Egypt would be ruled successively by the descendants of Ptolemy I. While openly they have embraced the Egyptian Pantheon, many still remain unconvinced that the current Pharaoh, Lysandra, isn't secretly a devotee of the Greco-Roman Gods.

Such uncertainty is what led Amanirenas, Queen of Kush, to declare herself the true Pharaoh. As a direct descendant of the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty and

legitimate Queen of Kush, her declaration has been taken quite seriously in Lower Egypt, as evidenced by the massive royal bounty Lysandra has placed on the renegade Queen's head.

Further complicating matters, Amanirenas seems to be in possession of the lost Crown of Upper Egypt, one half of Narmer the Uniter's coronation crown. Missing since the Macedonian conquests the crown of Upper Egypt had been thought destroyed. The current Ptolemaic dynasty has thus far ruled with only the Lower Egyptian half of the crown, further undermining their authority. With this revelation Amanirenas was able to move her forces out of Kush and into much of Upper Egypt without resistance. Though roughly half the territory is under Kushite control, the jewel of Upper Egypt — Thebes — still remains firmly under the control of Lysandra and Lower Egypt, whose fierce defense of the city has blunted the Kushite incursion.

The Uniter's Crown

The Uniter's Crown. The crown used by Narmer the Uniter after successfully bringing both Upper and Lower Egypt under his rule, the crown detaches into two separate pieces that can be worn individually both of which grant the wearer great power. When combined the crowns become much more than the sum of their parts and grant the wearer extraordinary abilities. The most useful of these abilities being the crown's power to make its wearer's words hold great compulsion to those faithful to the Egyptian Pantheon.

Amanirenas knows that everyday Thebes remains outside of her control her claim to Upper Egypt weakens, but with her rapid push northward stalled she has little choice but to attempt a siege of the city and hope it capitulates before relief from Upper Egypt can arrive in force.

As it stands Amanirenas will accept only two outcomes: Egypt re-united under her crown and dynasty, or full recognition by Lower Egypt, Rome

and the Greek City states of her legitimate rule as Pharaoh of Upper Egypt and Kush — a formal separation of Egypt. The latter option is not well regarded among the Egyptian Pantheon, some of which are wary that splitting their domain into multiple mortal realms (as the Greco-Roman Pantheon has) will only further weaken

them against their rival deities in the coming wars. The former, meanwhile, is scoffed at by the leadership of Lower Egypt who still retain control of the largest population centers of Upper Egypt. Lysandra meanwhile has countered this demand, offering the rebel Queen and her followers amnesty and continued rule as Queen of Kush in exchange for the crown of Upper Egypt and a public swearing of fealty.

Neither Pharaoh is willing to relent at this point. Both have strong, fresh armies at their command and the royal coffers of the two Egypts has seen a mass influx of mercenaries and adventurers hoping to make their fortune in the chaos. For the time being the war appears to be locked in a stalemate.

Though they have thus far sat by and watched the war take its course the gods are beseeched by both Pharaohs to join their cause and put a quick end to this war before outside forces take advantage of the internal turmoil.





Parthia

Capital

Ctesiphon (700,000)

Major Settlements

Seleucia (400,000), Babylon (300,000),
Ecbatana (125,000), Merv (85,000), Hatra
(60,000), Assur (50,000), Uruk, (38,000)

Leader

King Artaban II

The Parthian Empire, with its cosmopolitan center nestled between the Tigris and Euphrates, is a remarkably diverse blend of cultures, languages, and religions. Stretching from the Mediterranean Sea in the west to the very edges of India and China in the east, the Parthians have fostered perhaps the greatest trade empire in history in the form of the over four thousand Roman mile long Silk road. The sheer size and scope of this union does however necessitate a delicate diplomatic balancing act carefully maintained by its Arsacid rulers. Recent conflict with Rome and the splintering of Imperial China has somewhat shaken their tight economic hold, but the Parthians remain determined to cement their place in history and outlast the series of Mesopotamian empires that preceded them.

Cradle of Civilization

Predating even the early civilization of predynastic Egypt, nomadic peoples had begun to settle in the Mesopotamian region over ten millennia ago. It was here, nourished by the primordial Tigris and Euphrates rivers that the first systems of

agriculture and writing emerged. The Sumerians, the first of many civilizations to call this land home, domesticated beasts of burden and cultivated crops in such large quantities that the first cities could be built and supported. Uruk, the greatest of these early city-states, made effective use of numerous societal and technological innovations that allowed it to dominate the region for nearly one thousand years.

The Mes

These gifts of civilization are often credited to the goddess Ishtar, having cleverly stolen them from her father Enki before delivering them to the people of Uruk. Enlil, god of the air, is said to have collected a series of divine decrees, each solidified into a physical form known as a Me. Though the origin of these Mes is unclear, some believe they were created by Anu himself before being scattered throughout the cosmos.



Enlil, content with having finally united the Mes, offered them to Enki for safekeeping, but Enki thought it best to divide them amongst the other gods. When it came time for Ishtar to accept her portion of the Mes, she distracted her father with a gift of divine wine before taking the remaining Mes and making her escape. Upon recovering from his drunkenness, Enki realized what had occurred and pursued Ishtar, but discovered he was too late— she had already distributed the Mes to the people of Uruk.

The Kings of Uruk

The city state of Uruk stood as a beacon of civilization for nearly a thousand years. While other regional settlements remained small and disorganized, they looked to Uruk in awe and jealousy, emulating their systems and culture in attempt to share in their greatness. Eventually these smaller settlements grew and became rivals in their own right, with the Elamites chief among them. It fell to the Priest-Kings of Uruk to defend their city against the depredations of these rivals.

As aggressive raiding parties became bolder in their conquest of small settlements, it became increasingly clear that the protection offered by the maxim of safety in numbers would only go so far. In an effort to defend the city of Uruk, massive walls of stone were raised and improved upon over the course of centuries. Some credit the legendary demi-god Gilgamesh with this monumental innovation, but no matter which King of Uruk first ordered their construction, none could argue their effectiveness in deterring invaders. To this day, the walls of Uruk stand unconquered, with only Sargon the Great managing to claim the city by siege.

The Conquests of Sargon of Akkad

Beginning life as an orphaned foundling, Sargon of Akkad was an unlikely ruler, let alone conqueror of what would become the first empire. An accomplished gardener, Sargon impressed the king of Kish well enough to become his cupbearer, a position which afforded Sargon an unusual amount of political influence.

As the son of the legendary Sorceress-Queen Kubaba, Ur-Zababa of Kish possessed an extraordinary lifespan, with some estimating his reign as lasting approximately four centuries. Though the magic inherent to his blood preserved his body, over these centuries Ur-Zababa's mental state deteriorated considerably. As his madness and paranoia grew, he distanced himself from his court of advisors, relying on Sargon, an outsider to the politics of the Kish nobility to handle many affairs of state. Soon, however, the king's ire would fall on Sargon as well.

Like his mother before him, Ur-Zababa was granted visions in the form of prophetic dreams which served to guide his decisions as king. In one such dream, Sargon sat upon the throne of Kish, with the goddess Ishtar at his right hand. Terrified both of losing Ishtar's favor and of being overthrown, Ur-Zababa prepared a scheme. Simply killing Sargon would risk angering the gods, so he ordered the royal smith to prepare a great bronze mirror upon which a cunning spell was cast: any whom passed through its glass would become eternally trapped.

Summoning Sargon to his side, the king ordered him to carry a message to Belic-tikal, the chief smith of the temple forge, where the mirror's trap lay in wait. Sargon, en route to carry out his duty was interrupted by a vision of Ishtar— a warning to not enter the temple. Waiting instead at the gates, Sargon confronted Belic-tikal when he emerged. The smith, perhaps struck by Sargon's divine countenance, confessed to his part in Ur-Zababa's plot and begged his forgiveness.



Sargon bade Belic-tikal send a new message to Ur-Zababa: the plan had been a success. When the king arrived at the temple forge to see the fruits of his scheme, he saw only himself in the great bronze mirror, and realized his mistake too late. With a push from Sargon, the king of Kish tumbled into his own trap and became a permanent prisoner of what would come to be known as the Mirror of Ur-Zababa.

With Belic-Tikal's testimony and Sargon's existing position as de facto vizier, a swift coronation was orchestrated by the inner circle. Though there was some dissent to Sargon's accession, Ur-Zababa had become an almost universally disliked ruler, and Sargon's humble beginnings served as a stark contrast to their previous tyrant in the eyes of the people.

Sargon moved quickly to consolidate his power, ordering the construction of a grand city which would come to be known as Akkad. When news of a rival conqueror came to him, Sargon's ambitions only grew. A former ensi of Umma, Lugal-Zage-Si, had recently taken control of a number of Sumerian city-states, and issued a challenge to Sargon from behind his walls at Uruk.

After raising his army, Sargon marched on Uruk, but his men became uneasy upon seeing the legendary walls of Gilgamesh before them. Undeterred, Sargon ordered his men to encircle the city, putting his skills as builder to the test as trenches and palisades were quickly erected. With their camp secure, the siege of Uruk began.

Lugal-Zage-Si, at first content to subsist off of Uruk's hoarded grain, soon grew restless behind his walls. After ordering a series of small skirmishes to test the defenses of Sargon's camp, he assembled the bulk of his defenders and charged forth from Uruk's main gate. The king of Uruk's charge proved effective as his concentrated force pushed through Sargon's lines, but Sargon quickly rallied as the men encircling the city began to pour upon Lugal-Zage-Si's flanks.

As the Battle of Uruk raged on it was clear that Sargon's forces had the upper hand. Lugal-Zage-Si made a desperate attempt to retreat back behind the walls of Uruk only to find himself surrounded by his enemies. Throwing down their weapons, the defenders of Uruk surrendered, and Lugal-Zage-Si

was paraded through the city in chains.

Emboldened by his success at Uruk, Sargon went on to annex a great swathe of southern Mesopotamia for his newly formed Akkadian Empire. Though the city-states that had been cowed by Lugal-Zage-Si saw a new opportunity for independence with his defeat, Sargon's mere appearance at their gates was enough for most to surrender to the man that had defeated the walls of Uruk.

Sargon would reign for over fifty years, with the Akkadian Empire he had founded lasting just short of two centuries. The trade routes he established, extending from the cedars of Canaan to the silver-rich Taurus Mountains set a precedent for the mercantile empires that would follow.

Rise of Babylon

As an unprecedented drought and a series of Elamite and Gutian invasions toppled several Mesopotamian city states, the Akkadian Empire's dominance of the region began to dwindle. Babylon, a relatively small, Amorite-controlled city persevered through this dark age before finally expanding into a sizable empire under the rule of Hammurabi.

Having inherited control of Babylon from his father, Hammurabi immediately set to work restoring order to what was now a sprawling, but largely lawless and unruly city. Beseeching the gods, he was given a series of laws which were to govern the inhabitants of Babylon, ranging from punishments for crimes such as robbery and murder to the specific compensation owed to the victim of a debilitating injury.

These divine laws, enforced by Hammurabi and his servants, were largely successful in bringing order to the city, allowing Hammurabi to focus on public works projects, erecting highly defensible walls around the city and building grand temples to honor the gods. Impressed by Hammurabi's successes, Marduk bade him spread the justice of the gods beyond the walls of Babylon, a task which Hammurabi accepted with aplomb.

Through a series of cunning alliances and a dominant display of military prowess, Hammurabi

succeeded in expanding his territory into what would come to be known as the Babylonian Empire. First turning to the aggressive Elamites of the Zagros Mountains, Hammurabi struck a deal with the King of Larsa to join forces and divide Elam between them. Though the campaign against the Elamites was successful, Larsa proved to be a fickle ally, failing to show at a key battle in a clear act of betrayal. Fresh from his victory in Elam, Hammurabi wasted no time in punishing Larsa, annexing its territory and demanding a yearly tribute in reparations.

In this manner, Hammurabi would go on to unite the whole of Mesopotamia under his rule. Though these conquered lands soon chafed under the imposed tribute, few can argue the effectiveness of the Code of Hammurabi in keeping order, with variations of these decrees being utilized to this day.

The Folly of Andragoras

Just over three centuries ago, Andragoras, an ambitious military commander serving under the Seleucid king Antiochus was granted the satrapy of the frontier provinces of Parthia and Hyrcania. These provinces, now merged under Andragoras' rulership, lay far from the bustling hub of Seleucia, and it was not long before the newly appointed satrap became discontent with his far-flung position. Seeing an opportunity in Antiochus' preoccupation with the ongoing Judean uprising, Andragoras sent messengers to parlay with the nomadic Dahae confederacy, inviting them to join in what would soon become an open rebellion against the Seleucid Empire.

Chief among these tribes were the Parni, led by Arsaces, a legendary bowman and rider responsible for uniting the nomadic tribes under one banner. Arsaces chose to answer Andragoras' summons, bringing with him a host of horse archers far beyond the satrap's expectations. The details of what happened next are disputed and sometimes contradictory, but it is clear that the meeting did not go as planned. The two parties came to blows, perhaps at some unintended

accident or insult, or perhaps through deliberate treachery, but no matter the cause, Andragoras and his men soon lay dead and Arsaces' host flooded into Parthia.

The Parni under Arsaces were somewhat unique in their behavior. Not mere raiders like many of their nomadic contemporaries, the Parni soon settled in the territories they had claimed from Andragoras, adopting many aspects of the cultures they encountered there.

Arsaces' descendants would grow the Parthian Empire at the floundering Seleucids' expense, with inner turmoil and foreign influence making them prime targets for Arsacid expansion. By the time the remnants of the Seleucid Empire in the west were finally annexed by the Romans, the Parthian seat at Ctesiphon had been well established, growing from a humble military camp to what could be described as the center of culture and trade of the known world.

Mithridates, King of Kings at the time, did not wishing to destroy the former capital of Seleucia, instead seeking to elevate Ctesiphon to such a degree that it completely overshadowed the great cities that came before it.

Emulating Seleucia's own inspiration, Babylon, Mithridates raised monuments and built temples to the gods before inviting far-flung artists and traders to help foster the burgeoning capital's role as a growing center of culture.

Satisfied with his work, Mithradates bade his priests issue an open invitation to the gods: survey the cities of Babylon, Ctesiphon, and Seleucia, and decide which among them most exemplified their glory.



A People's King

Mithridates' Parthian host was so vast that even peacefully entering the surrendered city of Seleucia would have been damaging. Had Mithridates chosen to rest his army within the city's walls, famine and steep decline for its peoples would have undoubtedly followed.

Babylon, long the seat of culture and religious significance, had fallen into disrepair over the course of the rule of the Achaemenids and Seleucids. Though home to impressive monuments, their state of decay offended Ishtar, and she quickly passed her judgment.

With a tremendous display of power, Ishtar raised great walls of earth and stone around Ctesiphon before dismantling the Babylonian monument with her namesake — The Ishtar Gate. Brick by brick, the Ishtar Gate was reconstructed within the unnatural edifice of Ctesiphon — a gift for the city that had impressed her, and a punishment for the city that had neglected her.

Soon, pilgrims and travelers from throughout the world would visit Ctesiphon to marvel at her divine gate, with Seleucia becoming increasingly overshadowed.

Recent Events

The current Parthian King of Kings, Artaban II, has only recently claimed the throne from his elder brother. When their father, Artaban I, was murdered, a short-lived civil war was sparked with each brother accusing the other of patricide. The House of Suren came to Artaban II's aid, and with the charismatic General Suren at his side, Artaban II defeated his brother's army and claimed the Parthian throne.

Under King Artaban II, General Suren has overseen the defense of the Parthian Empire against the depredations of its neighbors.

Famous far beyond the Parthian borders for his exploits, Suren is seen as something more than a military leader, elevated to heroic status by the people. His enduring popularity has made King Artaban II and his advisors somewhat nervous. After all, Artaban II rose to power through violent means himself, and a second populist uprising under Suren could prove disastrous for Artaban's somewhat precarious position.

General Suren's usefulness is beyond question (having unfailingly defended the Empire against all comers) for the time being, so it remains unlikely that Artaban would attempt anything so drastic as having Suren killed, but as his paranoia grows, so too do his fears of being overthrown in the same manner as his father and brother.

No King Rules Alone

Wary of Suren's rising popularity, King Artaban has turned to other advisors, most notably Anna of Arbela, named for Ishtar's archaic name, Inanna. A scholar of lost magics and forbidden arcana, Anna has managed to quickly gain the King's favor and he is known to seek out her advice on a daily basis.



Anna of Arbela



Rome

Capital

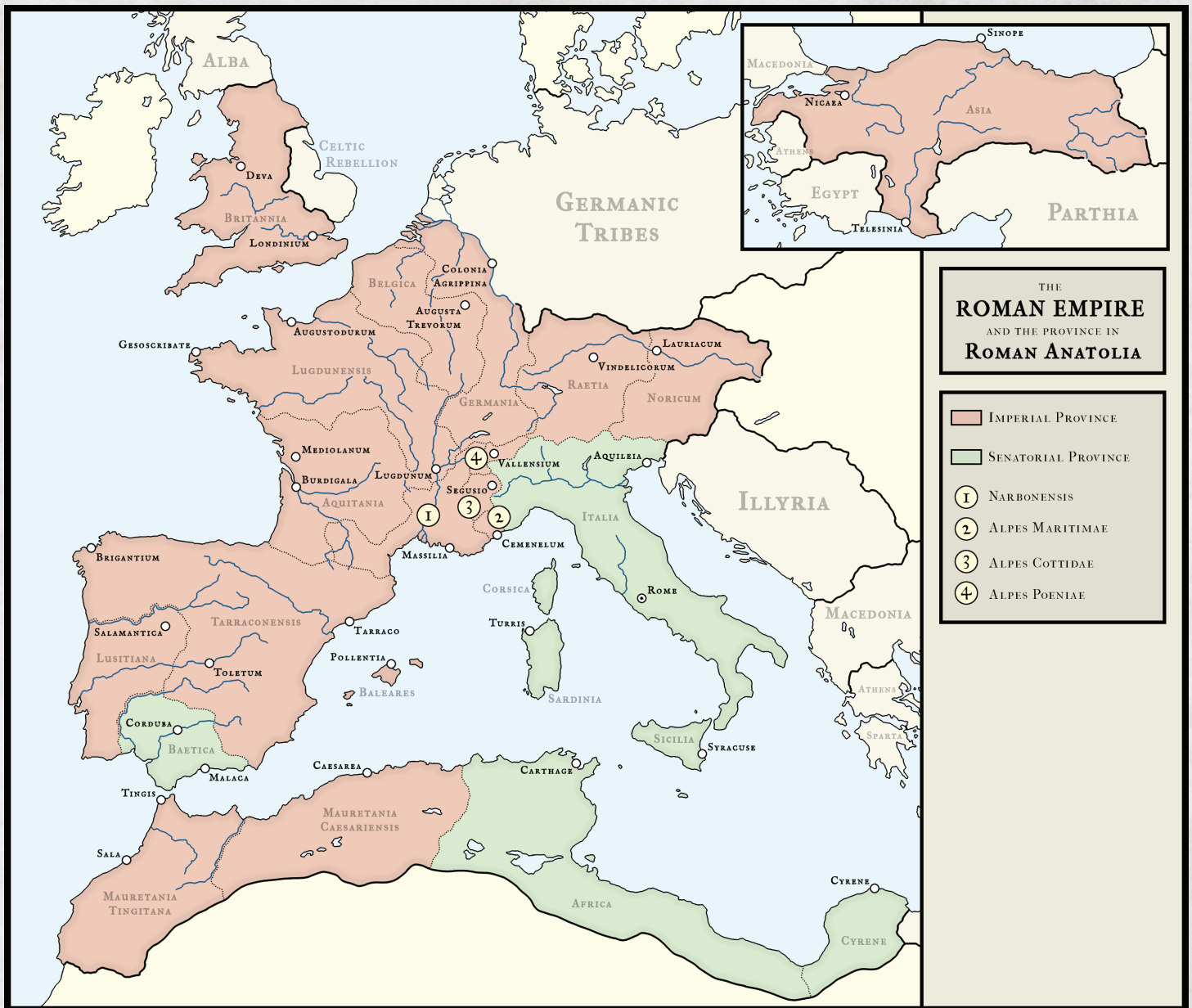
Rome (1,000,000)

Major Cities

Telesinia (200,000), Londinium (85,000),
Syracuse (50,000), Malaca (150,000)
Carthage (100,000)

Leader

Emperor Lucius Valerius



Trojan Origins

Aeneas, the demi-god son of Venus and the Trojan prince Anchises was one of the few survivors of the fall of Troy. He fought valiantly against the Greek invaders, but, outnumbered and overwhelmed, he was forced to flee as the city burned. Escaping by ship, Aeneas led a group of Trojan refugees on a Mediterranean voyage that largely paralleled that of Ulysses, visiting numerous islands including Crete and Sicily in search of a more permanent home. Finally settling on the western coast of the Apennine Peninsula, Aeneas encountered King Latinus, who claimed

that his augurs had foretold the Trojans' arrival. So impressed by Aeneas' story and of the great destiny which seemed to follow him, Latinus permitted the Trojans to settle in the lands of Latium, and offered to Aeneas his daughter's hand in marriage. Aeneas accepted, though Princess Lavinia's previous suitor — King

Turnus of the Rutuli — saw this as a betrayal. Declaring war against the Latins, Turnus framed the Trojans as foreign invaders as he gathered a host of incensed tribes to lay siege to Latium and punish Aeneas.

Though Turnus' armies were formidable, Aeneas was not without allies of his own. The men of Tuscany and Evander, king of the Arcadians, pledged their support to Aeneas in the war to come, with Evander's son, Pallas, becoming a close friend to the Trojan hero. Venus, proud of her mortal offspring, succeeded in persuading Vulcan to forge a powerful sword and shield for Aeneas, which he wielded to great effect.

The war would prove costly to both sides, with the Rutuli claiming several early victories before being sent back by the arrival of Aeneas' Tuscan and Arcadian allies. Finally meeting under the pretense of single combat with Turnus, Aeneas was struck with a poisoned arrow and nearly slain. As the Rutuli took advantage of Aeneas' now leaderless host, Venus saw fit to intervene, healing her son's near-fatal wound and urging him to pursue Turnus.

Surprised by Aeneas' sudden return, King Turnus attempted to flee, but was soon locked in the single combat he had so treacherously avoided. Beaten down and defeated, Turnus begged for mercy, but Aeneas, seeing Pallas' belt hanging as the king's trophy, had none left to give. Having avenged his friend with a final swordthrust, Aeneas claimed victory over the Rutuli and established a lasting dynasty in Latium from his seat at Lavinium.

Alba Longa

Ascanius — son of Aeneas and Lavinia — founded a settlement not far from the place where the Trojans first made landfall. Alba Longa, as it came to be known, was in many ways a precursor to the great city of Rome, with many of Rome's patricians claiming Alban descent.

For over four hundred years the line of Aeneas would rule as the kings of Alba Longa, until King Numitor was overthrown by his brother, Amulius. As Numitor fled, Amulius sought to secure his new position as king, executing his nephew, Lausus — his brother's chosen heir — and seizing Rhea Silvia, his niece.

Not seeing his niece as an immediate threat, Amulius instead sought to ensure she would never produce offspring to challenge him.

After threatening to give her the same fate as her brother, he offered an

alternative— swear an oath to the gods and become a Vestal Virgin. She accepted, but even under constant surveillance by her uncle's servants, Rhea Silvia became pregnant. When her pregnancy became too great to conceal, she confessed that she had not broken her oath, as she had not lain with a mortal man, but instead with the God of War himself — Mars.



*Emperor Lucius
Valerius*

Furious, Amulius first thought to rid himself of Rhea Silvia once and for all, but his priests urged him to reconsider, as the Vestals had chosen to back her claims of a divine pregnancy. Though he doubted her testimony, Amulius was unwilling to make an enemy of the priesthood, let alone the God of War himself in the unlikely event that her claims proved true. That being said, he could not abide a possible threat to his still-tenuous power, and so reluctantly waited to see if Rhea's offspring would be male or female.

Wolf Twins

Upon their birth, Romulus and Remus proved to be the king's worst fears made real; not only were they the rightful male heirs of Numitor, but they were twins — an auspicious omen. Upon Amulius' orders the twins were seized from their mother and brought before the king. Once again Amulius was cautioned by his priests, but this time the king paid them no heed. The twins were to be hurled into the Tiber as a sacrifice to the river god Tiberinus.

The man ordered to carry out this act of brazen infanticide was a priest of Tiberinus, and, taking the twins in swaddled cloth, was escorted to a cliff overlooking the Tiber by Amulius' elite guards. Offering a whispered prayer to the god of the river, the priest begged for the twins' safe passage before dropping them to the waters below. Tiberinus, having heard the priest's plea, calmed the Tiber's mighty waves and gently deposited the twins at the base of the Palatine Hill.

There, at what would one day become the very center of the great city of Rome, Romulus and Remus were discovered by a wolf, who, having recently lost her own pups to a storm, saw fit to raise the two foundlings as her own. Dragging them by their swaddling cloth to a nearby cave, the wolf nursed the twins for weeks before their echoed cries attracted the attention of Faustulus, a local herdsman.

With a gift of mutton, the protective wolf-mother was sated, and Faustulus claimed the two children, raising them as his own sons. For years, the two brothers lived as the men of the hills did, tending the herds and learning the ways of the shepherd, though rumors of forays into the woods

and moonlit hunts with the local wolf packs made the hill-folk uneasy.

As years passed, the boys grew into young men, and word of the wolf-born twins eventually made it to Alba Longa and King Amulius. Consulting his priests, he came to fear that these were the very same twins he had sacrificed to Tiberinus two decades ago. Their survival only lent credence to their possible divine origin, with fate seeming to place them on a collision course with his claim to rule.

First sending spies to observe and confirm their identities, Amulius quickly resorted to hiring assassins when it became clear that the boys so clearly resembled their Alban mother. These assassins tracked the brothers into the woods, staging an ambush in the midst of one of their midnight hunts, but soon found themselves surrounded by wolves and at the mercy of the twins.

Terrified, the king's assassins revealed the truth: Romulus and Remus were the grandsons of Numitor, the rightful king of Alba Longa, and Amulius would not rest until they were dead. Calling off the wolves, the twins allowed the assassins to flee before seeking out their grandfather, the exiled king.

Numitor had not been idle in his years of exile. Though he spent no small amount of time and effort hiding from his brother's assassins, his true goal was not mere survival— he intended to build an army capable of restoring him to the throne. This army of loyalist supporters remained lean out of necessity, moving from holdout to holdout and camping in the woods most often.

When Numitor's retinue became surrounded by wolves his personal guards were prepared for a fight, but they soon became perplexed as the arrival of Romulus and Remus calmed the beasts. Numitor, having heard stories of the twins' exploits was quickly overcome with emotion at their resemblance to his daughter, Rhea Silvia, and, when they had finished their tale, embraced them as family.

Emboldened by the return of their king's heirs, the loyalists of Numitor gathered their strength and laid siege to Alba Longa. Amulius, his worst fears once again realized, led a desperate defense

of the city, but many of the men under his command switched sides when they saw Numitor at the head of his host beside his twin demi-god grandsons.

Betrayed by his own inner circle, Amulius was slain before Numitor's forces even breached the walls of Alba Longa. Once again declared king, Numitor was reunited with his daughter, who beheld her adult sons for the first time. Romulus and Remus were praised for their part in the restoration of the kingdom, and many among the people of Alba Longa believed that one or even both of the brothers deserved the throne over the aging Numitor. Not wishing to jeopardize their grandfather's position, the brothers elected to return to the hills that had become their home, taking with them a sizable group of Alban supporters.

Arriving at the base of the Palatine Hill where first they had been found and nursed by the wolf, Romulus declared that this should be the center of their new city. Remus, the more practical of the two, pointed to the more favorably positioned Aventine hill as the ideal location for a settlement, unimpressed by what he saw as Romulus' more sentimental choice. Though the brothers had been known to bicker, the argument that followed soon escalated beyond control, with their Alban supporters forced to separate them as they came to blows.

Now divided, the supporters of Romulus began to build their new settlement at the Palatine Hill, while the Aventine Hill soon became the home of the supporters of Remus. Of the two, Romulus proved the more skilled orator, staging lengthy sermons within earshot of the Aventine supporters in hopes of drawing more to his cause. Though Remus' ingenuity aided in the rapid construction of suitably sturdy structures, progress on the Aventine settlement slowed as some supporters grew weary of the back-breaking work.

The Palatine settlement continued at a more even pace, with much of Romulus' efforts focused on motivating his men and persuading Remus' supporters to join him. Remus, he hoped, would come to his senses after his supporters abandoned him. After a violent altercation between the rival

settlements left several Albans dead, however, Romulus shifted his focus to constructing a stone wall around the Palatine Hill— if Remus would not join him, he would shut him out.

Remus, growing increasingly bitter at his brother's provocations, decided that he would demonstrate just how ineffective his wall really was, scaling it in the middle of the night and mocking its construction. As Romulus — already incensed — approached, Remus pulled a supporting stone from the unfinished wall and laughed as the whole structure collapsed.

Falling on each other like wolves, the brothers fought viciously, a lifetime of disagreements culminating in this final rage. Romulus, grasping a stone from the very symbol of his wasted labor, brought it down upon his brother's head. In the end, just as a wolf pack selects its alpha, so too did Rome find its first king.

The Seven Kings of Rome

Despite the fratricidal nature of his rise to power, Romulus proved an effective and popular ruler, with the Palatine settlement soon growing to encompass what would come to be called the Seven Hills of Rome. However, Romulus was not destined to rule the city he had founded forever; Just as the Palatine Hill would serve as the first of the Seven Hills, Romulus would in turn serve as the first of the Seven Kings. Romulus, while inspecting his troops at the Campus Martius, was said to have been suddenly swept up by a powerful localized storm, disappearing before their very eyes.

While some claim that this was an act of divine retribution for Romulus' treatment of Remus, or perhaps the Sabines, the Romans still celebrate what they believe to be Romulus' ascension and apotheosis at the hands of Jupiter, or perhaps his own divine father, Mars. Even now, they claim, Romulus wanders the Elysian Fields, never having tasted death's sting.

The six kings that followed Romulus had much to live up to, and none perhaps rose so well to this occasion as Numa Pompilius. A Sabine by birth, Numa was the one man capable of uniting the disparate peoples of Rome under one cause—not through war, but through piety. Numa

established himself as a king of peace, disbanding the king's personal guard as a symbol of his trust of the people. Numa believed that his rule was predicated on the people's belief in him, and that if the people demanded his death, it was his own failings as king that were to blame. Though the Celeres would be reinstated by his predecessors.

A Worthy Rival

For a quarter of a millennium, the Roman Republic thrived without the menace of a true existential threat. No longer subject to the unchecked whims of a singular monarch, Rome soon grew to encompass the entire Apennine Peninsula through the annexation of the city states of Magna Graecia. The remaining Greek colonies situated on the island of Sicily would prove to be the catalyst for the first of a series of wars with the preeminent Mediterranean, maritime power— Carthage.

A North African civilization founded by colonists of Phoenician descent; the Carthaginians were a sea-faring people with a complex system of government not unlike Rome's. Remarkably cosmopolitan, the city of Carthage was the center of an unprecedented trade network that spanned much of the known world. Carthage and Rome, though destined to become bitter enemies, began as friendly rivals, enjoying a military alliance cemented by strong trade relations. These two civilizations, mirrors of each other in so many ways, would find themselves at odds as their expansionist desires for dominance of the Mediterranean collided.

The First Punic War

Due to the wanton antics of an Italic mercenary company known as the Mamertines, the first conflict between Carthage and Rome began in earnest. The islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica each became battlegrounds, with the legions effectively cut off from their conventional supply lines. Compared to the naval might of Carthage, the Roman fleet was all but nonexistent, having primarily been used to ferry merchants and fend off the occasional pirate. Though the legions proved more than capable of rebuffing

their opponents on land, Carthaginian naval superiority was instrumental in securing a series of early victories.

Ever adaptive, the Romans immediately began to devise a solution to their most obvious weakness, and, having seized the wreck of a Carthaginian quinquereme, attempted to backwards-engineer the ship's design. Though this first Roman vessel was a somewhat crude copy of the original, the senate quickly approved the assembly of a fleet of these heavy warships, and they were deployed in remarkably short order.

A costly defeat at sea forced Rome to rethink their designs, however, and soon, a more advanced warship was developed, making use of alternate materials to ensure the new vessels were lighter and more maneuverable than their previous attempt. A novel boarding device, dubbed the *corvus* due to its resemblance to a crow's beak, was devised, along with the implementation of a new form of naval infantry called the *Marinus*— marines.

With Carthage's naval strength finally being challenged, the war was pushed to the shores of North Africa. Were it not for the military expertise of the Spartan mercenary Xanthippus, Carthage may have been destroyed then and there, but after heeding the cunning warrior's strategic advice, the Carthaginians cemented their place as Rome's greatest enemy in the wars to come.

Carthage's greatest general, Hannibal, proved to be nearly the undoing of Rome itself, staging a bloody campaign throughout the Apennine Peninsula that harried the Republic for over fifteen years. In the end, Carthage proved its own undoing as it refused to supply Hannibal for fear of what he might do upon his victorious return.

Forced back to defend the land of his birth, Hannibal faced the Roman general Scipio in what would be the deciding battle of the Punic Wars. Scipio had been but a boy when Hannibal succeeded in marching his war elephants into Roman territory, and now faced the man who had shaped his military career. Standing with Scipio were the previously humiliated survivors of the massacre at Cannae, and, hungry for a second chance at glory, they proved themselves up to the

task, earning Scipio the agnomen Africanus.

The third and final Punic War was a comparatively short and brutal affair, with the Romans taking advantage of a minor breach of their previous treaty with Carthage to instigate the conflict. Despite Carthage's attempts to appease the Roman invaders, the legions made certain there would be no fourth war, tearing down its walls and leaving the city in ruins.

Over a century later the site of the ruins of Carthage, though said to be cursed, has begun to be redeveloped into a modern Roman port town. Despite the history and superstition surrounding it, Roman Carthage is rapidly becoming a burgeoning trade hub, with a population nearing 100,000.

Conquest of Gaul

Two Centuries ago, the Roman Republic, ascendant from its successful conquests in Carthage and Iberia, turned its eyes north.

Led by the charismatic and gregarious patrician, Gaius Julius Caesar, the Roman Republic would wage a series of wars against the tribal societies of Gaul, conquering each in turn and annexing them into the greater Republic.

The Helvetii Migration

The first targets of this great conquest would be the Helvetii. Long alpine neighbors to the Republic, the Helvetii had come under increasing pressure from the Germanic tribes to their north and, fearing conquest, decided to undertake a great migration, with nearly all of the five-hundred thousand Helvetii electing to abandon their lands and strike out towards the less-populated western coast of Gaul.

Burning their villages, despoiling their fields, and slaughtering what animals could not be brought with them, the Helvetii ensured there would be no going back. Reaching the border of Transalpine Gaul, the Helvetii attempted to negotiate safe passage through the Roman territory with Governor Gaius Julius Caesar. Though the governor entertained their diplomats and feigned sympathy for their cause, ultimately, he denied their request for passage through his province.

Though not always peaceful in relations, the Roman senate greatly preferred the Gauls as their northern neighbors as opposed to the even more barbaric Germanic tribes who would surely move in to take the place of the Helvetii.

During his meetings with the Helvetii negotiators Caesar became acquainted with the nobleman Orgetorix, the most vocal of the Helvetii elite that opposed the migration. Caesar and Orgetorix began plotting a coup. Orgetorix, with Roman backing, would assassinate the other Helvetii aristocrats and seize control over the tribe, resettling them with the promise of Roman assistance against the Germanic tribes.

The conspiracy had barely begun to take shape before word of it was leaked to the Helvetii leadership. Knowing he would now never be accepted back by his people for plans of treason, Orgetorix committed suicide before he could be executed by his fellow aristocrats.

Now wary of Governor Caesar and Roman intentions, the Helvetii called off negotiations and moved to march north around the province of Transalpine Gaul, avoiding all Roman territory.



Caesar had planned for this however and, during negotiations, had amassed nearly thirty thousand legionary soldiers within Transalpine Gaul. With legionary scouts trailing them, the Helvetii were under Roman watch the entire march. It was during the Helvetii crossing of the Saone River that the Romans struck. Waiting until nearly two third of the Helvetii had made the crossing, the legions under Caesar struck those still behind, slaughtering them to the last man, woman, and child.

In the course of a single day the legions corps of engineers erected a pontoon bridge and all thirty-thousand legionaries completed the crossing through the night.

The Helvetii, realizing they faced slaughter if they met the Romans in open combat, took up a grueling pace, attempting to stay ahead of their pursuers. The injured, the sick, the old, and the slow were left to fend for themselves and none were shown mercy by the advancing legions. Helvetii Druids captured by the Romans were subject to especially harsh treatment. Handed over to the legionary Battlemages, the druids were subject to intense magical torture in attempts to extract information that may be used against their deities.

Roman Battlemages

Mages serving in the Roman Legions are segregated into their own corps.

Unlike the standard legionaries who serve twenty-five-year long terms of service, Battlemages typically serve for life, with their extensive training not finishing until well into their second decade in the legion. Though they may be retired along with other members of their legion after a successful campaign, this is typically reserved for only the eldest among their numbers. Battlemages join the legion between age thirteen and sixteen and most commonly come from aristocratic families with too many heirs.

Though nominally voluntary, most who join have been raised since birth to make this choice. Only rarely does a child refuse to join once their time comes and these often become outcasts from their families.

When in combat the Battlemages are deployed to support the regular soldiers, with one mage assigned to each century. These mages provide their century with both artillery and defensive support against enemy casters.

The mages are looked upon by their fellow soldiers with a mix of reverence and fear. Their great powers often mean the difference between victory and defeat, especially against Druids and Spirit-Singers along the borders. Still, seeing their destructive prowess first hand leaves even the most skilled legionary feeling vulnerable against the greater threats of the world.

The advance took its toll, however, and Roman supplies quickly ran thin as the supply lines failed to keep pace with the legions. Faced with starving soldiers, Caesar turned his legions towards allied Gaulic territory of Bibracte to re-supply.

Having reached the territory of two smaller but allied tribes, the Boii and the Tulingi, the Helvetii convinced them that now was the time to strike back at the pursuing legions, while they were unprepared and resupplying.

The Battle of Bibracte

The Gaulic lord of Bibracte, Dumnorix, though nominally an ally of Rome, had done what he could to delay resupplying the legions, hoping to give the Helvetii and their allies time to catch the hungry Romans. Catching up to the Roman rearguard, the Helvetii began a series of attacks probing the weaknesses of the Roman lines. Though caught flatfooted, the Romans had defensive positioning, having made camp around a modest hill, the top of which served as Caesars headquarters.

Though outnumbered, the Romans' superior training and equipment allowed them to repulse a half dozen Helvetii charges. Key to this success was the massed barrages of Pila employed by the legion. From their high-ground position these throwing spears exacted a heavy toll on the Helvetii attackers.

Sensing the Helvetii weakness after the sixth attacks was repulsed, the Legionaries drew their blades and waded down the hill into the thick of combat and gave chase across the open fields after the retreating Helvetii. It was during this

pursuit that the Boii and Tulingi arrived with fifteen thousand men to flank the Roman lines. At this moment the Helvetii ceased their retreat and turned on their pursuers.

Having considered this possibility, Caesar had ensured to keep a pair of Legions, as well as several thousand Auxiliaries, in reserve. Though the allied Gauls outnumbered the Romans nearly two-to-one, the discipline and strategy of the legions proved to be too much for them to overcome. Fighting late into the night, the Romans eventually pierced the Helvetii's main line and seized their baggage train, capturing the Helvetii supplies for their own use. Here the Romans also found the son and daughter of Orgetorix, who had been held as prisoners since their father's suicide.

With their lines split and their supplies lost, the Helvetii and their allies began a hasty and disorganized retreat during which many units were hunted down and slaughtered by the Romans.

Journey's End

Reduced to a fifth of their original numbers, the surviving Helvetii made for the territory of the Lingones, a powerful Gaulic tribe with whom they had friendly relations. Caesar sent warnings to the Lingones, threatening the same fate for them as had befallen the Helvetii should they render aid.

Fearing a war with Rome, the Lingones denied the Helvetii access to their territory. Faced with no other options, the Helvetii surrendered to the Romans. The surviving aristocrats would face immediate execution, while those few remaining druids would be given to the battle-mages, never to be heard from again.

The remaining Helvetii, now numbering only one hundred thousand, were forcibly marched back to their territory east of Transalpine Gaul, where they would be made a Roman client tribe and used as a buffer between the Republic and the Germanic Tribes to the north.

Orgetorix's son would be placed by Caesar as the new head of the remaining Helvetii, and given a substantial Roman retinue to act as his personal guard (as well as to ensure his continued loyalty.)

Gallic Merchants Alliance

After the conquest and upon completion of the Druidic Cleansing the Celtic people of Gaul found themselves with a power vacuum at the top of their society. Though Rome and her appointed Governors had ultimate control of the territory the day-to-day and local affairs were quickly taken over by the wealthy Gallic merchants.

Holding the majority of the remaining wealth in the hands of the Gauls, and encouraged by the anti-druidic Roman governance, the merchants rapidly expanded their powers and influence. Boosted by the greatly expanded interest of the wealthy of Rome and Greece but wary of being displaced by traders from the Empire, the merchants established a guild throughout the Gallic lands to monopolize trade in the region.

The Romans, for their part, were content to allow this, believing the Gauls would be easier to control and Romanize if their own people were left in control of some of the more visible positions of power. This course of action has proven mostly successful as the merchants quickly adopted Latin as their primary trade language and this has begun to trickle into wider Gallic society.

Today the merchant's alliance has outposts in all of the major cities of Gaul and their members can be found in every market across the region. Though still dominated by the native Gauls, many of whom now identify as full Roman citizens, waves of migration from across the Empire have forced the guild to begin accepting members of all Imperial backgrounds

Birth of an Empire

In the aftermath of this victory over the Helvetii, Caesar would be given command of the Roman conquest of Gaul and Britannia. Succeeding beyond expectation, Caesar would grow to become one of the most powerful and well-loved men in the Republic.

Elected to the position of Consul, many in the Senate grew to fear the power Caesar was coming to wield and, in an event known as the Great Betrayal, a group of senators would conspire to see Caesar assassinated within the very halls of the senate. Though conducted under the banner of democracy, this action would lead to a bloody civil war in which conspirators were defeated and Lucius Valerius was named Emperor of Rome by the remaining senators and Jupiter himself for his actions in stabilizing the new Empire.

Lucius Valerius is considered a good administrator and skilled commander, but he lacks the charisma of Caesar and though widely supported by the common people, he is hardly loved.

The Empire still maintains many of the traditions and institutions of the Republic. The senate still maintains control over legislation, though it can be vetoed at will by the emperor, and two Consuls are still elected yearly who nominally stand as the heads of government, even as the emperor embodies the state of Rome itself. Together the consuls and Emperor form a triumvirate that handles the executive governance of the empire.

Of Roads and Rivers

Though today the Senate is often thought of as a den of schemers and backstabbers, there are still those who seek to do the public good with their position. Such is the case with Senator Virius Carinus Primus. A member of the Senate commerce and infrastructure committees, he is committed to ensuring the smooth transport of both goods and people across the Empire and has sponsored numerous pieces of legislation to fund new roads and bridges, most recently in the surrounding territories to Telesinia.

*Senator Virius
Carinus Primus*



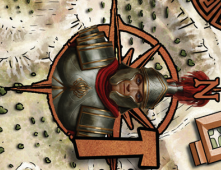


Telesinia

The Eastern Jewel of the Roman Empire, Telesinia is a sprawling metropolis of nearly three hundred thousand. Founded just over a century ago, during the Roman annexation of inner Anatolia, Telesinia has become the fastest growing city in the Empire and is second only to Rome itself in the value of the trade that flows through its ports.

Positioned along the mouth of the river Leucosyrus at the crossroads of Greece, Parthia, Egypt, and Judea, Telesinia is one of the most strategically important cities of the Empire and has become the lynchpin of Rome's ability to trade with the eastern powers. Telesinian merchants are a common sight from Napata to Babylon and beyond. In recent decades traders out of Telesinia have even begun to arrive in the warring Chinese kingdoms, returning with luxurious silks, strange potions, and powerful magical items not before known to the western powers.

TELSSINIA



- 1 - Temple District
- 2 - Games District
- 3 - Harbor
- 4 - Garrison
- 5 - Garrison, Training Fields
- 6 - Governor's Mansion
- 7 - Forum & Market
- 8 - Slums/Warhouses District
- 9 - Market
- 10 - Wealthy District
- 11 - Bathhouses
- 12 - Noble Palaces
- 13 - Temple
- 14 - Aqueducts
- 15 - City Gate



Governance

Telesinia is governed by the Legate Astranacus, leader of the XXV Legion. The governor's mansion and Legionary headquarters are built upon a small pair of islets south of the city's main harbor.

Governor Astranacus is widely regarded to be a fair man, though one more concerned with military matters than with the day-to-day running of a major city. As such, much of the city's affairs are left in the hands of the elected magistrates of the city's local Vigintiviri, each of whom has control of the one of the city's public institutions. The institutions represented mirror those found in the Vigintiviri of Rome and other major Imperial Cities.

- The ten Judicandis — who run the city's courts.
- The four Nocturni — who handle arrests, imprisonment, and executions, including crucifixions.
- The four Monetales — who are responsible for the local minting of new gold and silver coins and also provide oversight of the local merchant guilds.
- The four Urbe Purgandis — who oversee the construction and maintenance of the local roadways.
- The four Curators Aquarum — who maintains the cities aqueducts and water systems. Elections are held yearly, with half the magistrates being elected at a time, with two-year terms of office. The positions are open to both Plebeian and Patrician candidates, though the Patrician class has dominated the majority of the roles since the city's inception a century ago.

The Collegia Opificum

Trade in the city is largely controlled by a pair of rival merchant guilds, the Ploíarchoi Emporiou, primarily composed of Greek speakers and the commercium dominorum who consist mostly of Latins. Though ostensibly legitimate trade organizations, both guilds also maintain interests in the city's underground activities and to many (especially within the slums) the guilds are viewed as little more than legitimized highway gangs.

The Ploíarchoi Emporiou are headquartered near the northern wall, just west of the Gorgon Gate. While the commercium dominorum are located along the river within the Patrician Quarter.

The Telesinian Trade Wars

Three decades ago, the Trade Wars, a series of conflicts that started when the (Latin Guild) seized the crew and goods of a clandestine (Greek Guild) ship that mistakenly docked at a (Latin Guild) controlled pier in the southern slums, threw the city into chaos. Discovering a trove of smuggled artifacts from Judea, Parthia, and even distant China, the (Latin Guild) had the crew killed before setting the uncrewed ship to sail back out to sea.

Unknown to the commercium dominorum was that the executed crew were not the regular brigands employed by the guilds for their underground activities, but were in fact led by the son of Eutychia, head of the Ploíarchoi Emporiou. When Antigonos failed to make contact, the Ploíarchoi Emporiou began to grow suspicious and seized several members of the commercium dominorum and, under torture, discovered the fate of the crew. Enraged by the execution of her son and the theft of their treasures, Eutychia began a series of targeted attacks against the commercium dominorum and their interests throughout the city.

Setting fire to numerous *Commercium Dominorum* owned ships and assassinating many of their key members, the Greeks began what would become known as The First Telesinian Trade War. The conflict would escalate into a series of increasingly large and bloody street battles throughout the city in which numerous civilians found themselves and their shops collateral damage. The conflict threatened to throw the city into chaos until the XXV legion crossed the Basilisk Bridge into the city and set about restoring order with brutal efficiency. Though it lasted only two months, the conflict saw the death of nearly a thousand of Telesinia's residents as well as numerous merchants in the local regions.

In the end the guild leaders were made to pay heavy reparations to those affected and large fines to the city government but were ultimately spared greater punishment.

Though never reaching the levels of bloodshed seen in the first Trade War, small scale conflict between the guilds has remained common place and a second major incident a decade ago saw more than two hundred dead after a month of fighting. Though things have been relatively peaceful between the guilds since the end of the Second Trade War, tensions have flared up again in recent months as Cassia, the new head of the *Commercium Dominorum*, aspires to see the Greeks thrown out of the city and trade handed over entirely to the Latins.

*Governor
Astranacus*



CHAPTER 2

PANTHEONS





The world is divided into numerous Pantheons, each of which maintains control over magic and mortals of specific territories in which they are venerated. On occasion, such as in Parthia, multiple Pantheons may coexist in peace, but typically they view one another as threats and enemies, competing for the mortal worship needed to fuel their power. Each Pantheon seeks to expand the size and influence of the mortal realms that worship them in hopes of further expanding their influence.

Greco-Roman Pantheon

Though originating in Greece, this pantheon is now based out of Rome, with Olympus serving as a secondary home. The Pantheon is led by the council of thirteen, with Jupiter serving as the head and overall ruler of the Pantheon.

Egyptian Pantheon

Though nominally headed by Ra, the Egyptian Pantheon is currently conflicted, with the gods looking to the raging civil war between Egypt and Kush and coming to different conclusions about which side should emerge victorious.

Chinese Pantheon

More loosely-organized than many others, Fu Xi serves as a first among equals to the deities of China, with Nuwa and Shennong also holding special respect. The deities of China are largely autonomous however, and primarily stick to their own affairs unless there is a looming threat to greater China.

Celtic Pantheon

Loosely organized and representing dozens of tribes with their own unique customs and practices, the Celtic Pantheon has formed closer ranks since the Roman conquests of Gaul and Britannia, with the surviving Gallic deities fleeing to the Isles to join with their cousin deities in defense of greater Celtic survival.

Sumero-Babylonian Pantheon

Led by Marduk, the Sumero-Babylonian Pantheon is among the most well-organized and powerful of all the Pantheons. With one of the most expansive domains, though shared with their Zoroastrian cousins, the Sumero-Babylonian gods find themselves ruling at the center of the known world.

Zoroastrian Pantheon

The smallest of the established Pantheons, there exist only two true deities in the Zoroastrian religion, though numerous demi-gods are present. In practice however, this is a Pantheon of one, as Ahriman is not publicly worshiped in any of the major cities of Parthia.



Greco Roman Pantheon

Asclepius/Vejovis

Son of Apollo and the Thessalian princess Coronis, Asclepius is the god of medicine, rejuvenation, and healing. His symbol is the Rod of Asclepius, a snake entwined staff that has come to represent medicine and healing across Greece and Rome.

He has five daughters with his consort Epione who all follow in his footsteps as healers to the sick and weary. The couple had a pair of sons, Podalirius and Machaon, both of whom were killed leading armies during the Trojan war. The loss of their brothers in war only solidified the sisters' commitments to healing and mercy rather than warfare and bloodshed.

Hygieia, goddess of cleanliness.

Laso, goddess of recuperation.

Aceso, goddess of mending.

Aegle, goddess of good health.

Panacea, goddess of the universal remedy.

Aphrodite/Venus

Goddess of love, beauty, pleasure, and passion, Aphrodite is regarded even by the other pantheons as one of the most strikingly attractive beings in all creation. Her otherworldly beauty and charm find even the strongest willed mortals unable to resist her.

Her exact origins remain largely a mystery to her mortal followers. Though many believe her

to be the daughter of Zeus and Dione, her origins are much older than that. During their titanic fight eons ago, Cronus severed his father, Uranus' genitals and cast them into the sea. Unknown to Cronus, his father's severed appendage would spawn yet one more child.

Born in a torrent of raging seas and roiling primordial energy, Aphrodite would emerge just off the coast of Cyprus. It was here that her veneration first began and to this day the island remains known for its fanatical devotion to the goddess. The Great Sanctuary of Aphrodite at Paphia is one of the largest temples of the Greco-Roman world and many pilgrims seeking the love goddesses' blessing travel to the island in the hopes of securing true love for themselves.

This puts Aphrodite as the sole child of Uranus who still maintains an active role in the world and the only one to sit with the Olympians in the Greco-Roman pantheon. Though even she herself is unaware of this fact.

Though married to Hephaestus, their relationship has grown strained and distant. In recent centuries it has become an open secret among the gods that she prefers the company of Ares to that of her husband. Though never confronted openly by the forge master, Ares has begun to notice a pattern in his recent weapons failing at the most inopportune moments of war.

The island of Cyprus finds itself in a strange place, though still entirely a part of the Greek world, it, like Crete and Rhodes, is nominally under the control of the Egyptian Pharaohs. Though Hellenistic in origin, the Ptolemaic Pharaoh's seeming embrace of the Egyptian deities has given the inhabitants, and Aphrodite herself, cause for some concern. Pharaoh Lysandra, for her part, seeks to maintain the peace between Egypt and the Greco-Roman gods, knowing that war with Greece and Rome would end in disaster for the already embattled Egypt.

To help maintain the peace, each of the island's governors have been chosen from the native Greek population and have all sought Aphrodite's blessing at her Sanctuary in Paphia before ascending to rule the island. Part of the agreements between Rome and Egypt also stipulate that the Greek populations under Egypt's control cannot be conscripted, thus the island pays its fealty in gold, silver, and all manner of smithed goods. Though outwardly in agreement, Aphrodite seethes at her island being used as a bargaining tool to keep peace between the mortal realms and rumors flow — primarily from Dionysus' mouth — that she may soon take action.





Artemis/Diana

Daughter of Zeus and Leto, twin sister to Apollo and the goddess of the hunt, the wilderness, and the moon, Artemis is one of the Greco-Roman Pantheon's most deadly fighters.

Though her worship is widespread throughout the Greek world, the center of Artemis' worship sits at the heart of the Rome. Her temple upon the Aventine Hill is one of the largest in the empire.

The birth of her and her twin was a tumultuous affair. Hera, furious at her husband's unfaithfulness, forbade Leto from giving birth either in Olympia or on the earthly realm. Despite the warning of Hera's wrath, the Cretans, strong followers of Leto, hid her on the island of Paximadia to their south. It was here that Artemis and Apollo entered the world and it was not long before the people of Crete came to worship them just as they did their mother.

Though Hera and Artemis have grown to find a mutual respect for one another, Hera still holds resentment towards the people of Crete for brazenly defying her commands centuries ago and none of the Cretans have received the Queen of Olympus' blessing since that day.

Much like Aphrodite, Artemis must contend with her island of veneration falling under Egyptian control. It is here, however, that the similarities between the two goddesses end.

Artemis has never taken a lover. Though she fell for the huntsman Orion, they never consummated their love before his death at her own hands, after which she swore never to love again. To this day the circumstances of Orion's death remain a mystery. Though many have tried to swoon the goddess, she rejects their advances with a mix of apathy and contempt.

Throughout her life she has also taken several actions that have damaged her relations with the other Greco-Roman gods. Most recently was her execution of Adonis — a mortal lover to Aphrodite — which has earned her the pleasure goddess' wrath. Adonis had demonstrated his hubris by publicly boasting of being the greatest huntsman in the world, greater even than the gods, making him a target of the goddess of the hunt. Aphrodite has sworn revenge.

She and her brother Apollo are also still remembered for what many see as treachery during the war with Troy. Both heavily venerated by the city, the twin gods, along with their mother Leto and the gods Ares and Aphrodite sided with the Trojans against the Greeks during the war. Though ultimately unsuccessful in their defense of the city, the siblings saw to it that a number of Trojan ships successfully escaped the Greek blockades. During the fall of the city Artemis was almost struck down by Athena — who had already defeated Ares — but was saved by intervention from Zeus, who, not wanting to severely weaken the pantheon, pardoned those gods who sided with Troy.

Apollo

Apollo is the Olympian god of light, music, archery, as well as both sickness and medicine. As the founder of the Oracle at Delphi, Apollo is also a god of divination and prophecy, gifts he teaches to those wise enough to comprehend such mysteries. Alongside his sister, Diana, Apollo is a prolific hunter of monsters, vanquishing evil with swift arrows fired from aboard his solar chariot.

The Wrath of Juno

Apollo's birth (along with that of his twin sister, Diana) was the result of one of Jupiter's many philandering trysts, in this case with the goddess Latona. When Juno discovered her husband's indiscretions, she banished Latona from Olympus, but not before leaving her with a most insidious curse: she could never give birth on solid ground.

Jupiter requested the aid of his brother, Neptune, who produced a free-floating island for this express purpose, unconnected either to the sea floor or solid ground. Here, suspended in the boughs of an olive tree, Latona gave birth first to Diana, and then to Apollo, with an attendance of goddesses bearing witness.

The island which would come to be known as Paximadia soon became properly moored off of the isle of Crete, and would serve as a suitable home and later hunting ground for the deific twins. Apollo and Diana are credited with the invention of archery (Apollo conceived the bow and Diana the arrow) with which the precocious young Olympians defended their mother from numerous foes sent by Juno.

Tityos, a monstrous giant, was the last and most fearsome of these attackers. Another child of Jupiter, Tityos was goaded into an act of jealous vengeance by Juno, who claimed that Jupiter had abandoned his mortal mother in favor of a new lover— Latona.

Seeking to destroy the object of his envy at Paximadia, Tityos assaulted Latona before being peppered with arrows as Apollo and Diana came to their mother's aid. A truly massive creature, the twins' arrows barely penetrated his thick hide as the enraged giant pursued the swift hunters into the deep woods.

Smashing through tree trunks like mere twigs, Tityos came dangerously close to grasping the young gods, but through clever maneuvering and their knowledge of the terrain they managed to ensnare their pursuer within the overgrowth. Thus restrained, Tityos struggled madly to free himself from his arboreal bonds, but became instantly still as a pair of arrows found their way into his wide eyes.

Juno, satisfied with the death of one of Jupiter's illegitimate offspring, made no more attempts on the lives of Latona and her children, and the three lived together in peace for many years.

Athena/Minerva

Goddess of wisdom, justice, law and warfare, Athena is one of the most prominent deities of the Greco-Roman Pantheon. Her worship and veneration rivals that of her father, Zeus.

Athena is the patron god of Athens, and the grand temple at the center of the city's great Acropolis is dedicated to her worship. Larger even than her temples in Rome, the Acropolis is the seat of Athena's power in the mortal world. Pilgrims from across the breadth of the Greek and Roman worlds travel to Athens to seek the war goddess' blessing. It is in fact required for each of the Roman Empire's legionary Legates to travel to Athens and receive her blessing before they may take control of their assigned legion. On the rare occasion a designated Legate is denied her blessing they face immediate execution. For only someone who had lied and cheated their way through the Legion's ranks, or someone who holds treason to the Empire in their heart could appear before her and be denied.

Athena is known to care more about, and intercede on behalf of, the mortal folk far more than the other Olympians. She advised the shipbuilder Argos in his construction of the Argo, the ship which Jason and his Argonauts would use to track the Golden Fleece. She spoke in favor of Odysseus and his companions before the assembled council of gods at Mount Olympus. She even granted to hero Diomedes the divine power he needed to wound Ares during the battle of Troy (an act for which Ares still swears vengeance.)

Despite this, Athena has been known to be wrathful to those mortals she deems have betrayed or disrespected her. In the aftermath of the Trojan war her wrath fell upon the very Achaean leaders she had blessed beforehand when they failed to punish Ajax the Lesser for his rape of the seeress Cassandra beneath Troy's statue to Athena.

Though she allowed Diomedes and Nestor to escape, she conspired with her uncle Poseidon to see the rest of the Achaean leaders drowned at sea.

Ares and Athena are both Greco-Roman gods of war. Two sides of the same coin, they embody very different aspects of the art. Ares represents the roiling fury of the battlefield, fulfilled by blood and carnage, while Athena prefers the temperance of strategy and tactics, probing her enemy's weakness before delivering a fatal strike. Though the two constantly butt heads when it comes to how to conduct warfare, it has been their combined might that has truly allowed the Romans to conquer so far so fast. Though most pantheons have multiple deities that fall within the same domains, it is a unique aspect of the Greco-Roman Pantheon to have two war gods neither of which is subordinate to the other.





Demeter/Ceres

Goddess of agriculture, fertility, and the harvest, Demeter is a life-giving deity and the keeper of sacred rites and customs. At temples and shrines throughout the Greco-Roman world sacrifices of fruit and grain are offered up in the hopes of a bountiful harvest, with her worshipers well aware of the seasons' inextricable link to their goddess' wellbeing. During the spring, when her daughter Persephone visits the surface world, Demeter is joyous and the world is warm and vibrant. When Persephone returns to her chthonic home in the underworld, Demeter's grim demeanor brings with it the winter's biting cold and the growing things of the world shrink away.

Bacchus/Dionysus

God of wine, festivals, ecstasy, and madness, Dionysus is well loved among the gods and the people. The patron of many of Rome and Greece's greatest festivals, his name is synonymous with revelry and merriment. His cults are also known to be particularly dedicated, often to degrees others find disturbingly fanatical.

Unique among the pantheon, Dionysus' origins lie not in Greece, but across the sea in Egypt and Kush, where his father, Amun, was once the chief deity. Before the founding of either the Greco-Roman or Egyptian Pantheons and before her marriage to Cronus, the Titaness Rhea took Amun as her lover. Though their union would result in no offspring, it was during this time that Amun met the nymph Amalthea, a close companion to Rhea and future foster

mother to Zeus. Though unknown to Rhea, Amun and Amalthea would have a torrid affair that resulted in the conception of a child — Dionysus.

Fearing what Rhea would do to the child should she discover the truth, the baby Dionysus was sent to Nysa, to be raised by the Hyades — a sisterhood of nymphs responsible for bringing the rains — where he would grow without fear of discovery.

As Dionysus grew, so did his fame. Endowed with a strong body, a quick mind, and extreme beauty Dionysus' legend quickly spread beyond Nysa. Early in his boyhood he discovered the art of winemaking, and quickly spread this talent to the few mortals of Nysa, who in turn spread it further into the Greek world. This growing fame however soon caught the attention of Rhea. Sensing the power of her lover within the young god, Rhea knew that Amun had been unfaithful.

Though he refused to reveal the identity of the boy's mother to spare Amalthea from Rhea's wrath he was unable to make amends and Rhea soon left him for the titan Cronus, with whom she would conceive the first generation of Olympians.

Several centuries later, when Dionysus had emerged fully from Nysa and begun settling into the Greek world, he encountered Hera, daughter of Rhea and Cronus. Hera looked on Dionysus and his followers with disdain, viewing them as no more than drunken rabble. She struck Dionysus with a curse to drive him mad. For years he wandered, confused and raving, unable to focus his mind until he was found again by Rhea, who, taking pity on the boy who had once caused her such heartbreak, cured him of her daughter's affliction.

Though cured of the curse, Dionysus would never be the man he once was. Forever altered by his years of insanity, he is still known to collapse back into madness when too deep in his cups. The cults to Dionysus likewise view madness as a sign of their god's blessing and many priests within his temples are known to rant and rave incoherently before their congregations.

In the aftermath of regaining his sanity Dionysus, undertook a great journey, traveling across the breadth of the world. From Greece, to Egypt, to Parthia, to India, and finally to China, Dionysus traveled and learned, spreading the

art of winemaking and with it his cult. Such did his teachings take hold that upon reaching the Indus River millennia later, Alexander the Great discovered a city named Nysa, whose inhabitants told him their city had been founded long ago by Dionysus during his travels. Today Nysa on the Indus is a part of the Indo-Greek Kingdom and remains a center for Dionysus' worship halfway across the world.

Upon his triumphant return to Greece Dionysus was offered a place by Zeus among the Pantheon — much to Hera's great anger — which Dionysus happily accepted. Known for his gregarious and generous personality, he has become a favorite among the other Olympians and has a very close, though entirely platonic, relationship with the Huntress Artemis and the two are often found feasting together. With Artemis providing the meat and Dionysus the wine.

Enyo/Bellona

A lesser war goddess, Enyo serves as an attendant and lieutenant to Ares. Enyo specializes in the complete razing of cities and her bloodlust and need for destruction are said to far surpass that of even Ares himself.

It is also known that during his travels to India the god Dionysus fought alongside Enyo in a battle against a native deity. Though the exact circumstances remain unknown, the two seem to still share a connection.

She and Athena are known to have a great hatred for one another, with Athena viewing her as a destructive madwoman, and Enyo seeing Athena as an obstacle on her own path to joining the Olympians.



Eris/Discordia

An enduring theme or common thread among the creation myths of the known world is the idea of a great void or Primordial Chaos from which all existence stems. From this sea of roiling nothingness, light, order, and life eventually came to be, with the primordial deities shaping and guiding creation towards the varied and complex forms we know today. There are some, however, that believe the world is destined to one day return to that Chaos. These entropic malcontents often delight in twisting the carefully laid plans of mortals and gods, perhaps none so boldly as the goddess Eris.

Goddess of Strife

The rebellious daughter of Jupiter and Nyx, Eris (or Discordia as she is known to the Romans) has no public temples dedicated to her, nor do mortals choose any specific day to venerate her name. Paradoxically, her power has not waned even as her worship is confined to hushed whispers and hidden rituals.

Some believe that she simply clings to her power like a miser, walking amongst mortals and refraining from great displays in order to conserve her strength. Those few that dedicate themselves to her secret cults know the truth, however. Instead of fostering priestesses and encouraging lavish sacrifice, Eris is content to draw her power from an unlikely source—conflict itself.

In times of peace, her boredom motivates her to yet greater displays of mischief, subtly pulling strings and encouraging fights between otherwise amicable neighbors. In times of war, she revels in the chaos, dancing unseen across the battlefield as she savors every violent and anarchic detail.

A masterful manipulator, Eris sees little distinction in playing her tricks on mortals or gods. It was in fooling both, after all, that she indirectly sparked the Trojan War.

The Apple of Discord

Formed by Eris out of pure Primordial Chaos, the Apple of Discord would prove to be the crux of one of her greatest feats of cunning and trickery.

Having observed the golden apples protected by her half-sisters in the Garden of the Hesperides, Eris sought to create an artifact equal to them in beauty, and greater still in power. To this end, she called upon her mother, Nyx, goddess of the night.

As her youngest daughter, Eris held a special place in Nyx's heart, so when Eris asked for her aid in acquiring the material, she would need to create the Apple, she could not refuse. Having been present at the beginning of creation, Nyx was one of only few to remember the process, but without hesitation she gifted a piece of Primordial Chaos to Eris before returning to the darkness.

Eris was overjoyed and wasted no time in using her mother's gift to fashion a golden apple of her own. Imbued with a portion of her power as well as that of her mother, the apple proved more volatile than even Eris could predict and quickly grew out of control.

Realizing her mistake, she summoned Mercury, whose magical expertise proved enough to help contain the destructive force she had unleashed.

To her surprise, Mercury did not scold her, but instead thanked her for what he considered a thrilling diversion from his myriad duties. In return, he confided in her a key piece of gossip: The gods were soon to meet at Olympus for the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, but it seemed Eris' invitation was conspicuously absent. Bristling at this perceived slight, she began to concoct a plan.

Hebe/Juventas

Daughter to Zeus and Hera, Hebe is the Goddess of youth and forgiveness. She served for years as the cupbearer to the Olympians until her marriage to Heracles when the role fell to the hero Gany-mede.

Hebe's powers are unique among the gods and she alone can stop, or even reverse, the aging in mortals. Many of the gods come to her when their favored mortals are reaching the end of their lifespans with the hope of having her return them to their youth. Some even claim that it is Hebe that is responsible for the eternal life enjoyed by all the gods of the Greco-Roman Pantheon.

She is known to enjoy taking the form of an eagle with which she soars across the skies of the earthly realm.

Hephaestus/Vulcan

God of the forge, blacksmiths, metallurgy, and volcanoes, Vulcan holds a special place within the Greco-Roman Pantheon, responsible for the creation many of his fellow god's, greatest arms and armor, as well as that of their many champions.

Born to Zeus and Hera, Hephaestus was shunned by his mother, who, upon seeing her child born with a withered and deformed foot, cast him from Olympus. Falling for a day and a night, young Hephaestus landed in the Ionian Sea, where he was discovered by the sea nymph Thetis — one of the fifty Nereids and future mother of the hero Achilles — who would raise the young god as her own.

During his time with Thetis, Hephaestus met the Sintians, natives to the island of Lemnos and renowned smiths. Here he would learn the arts of the forge and metallurgy. Quickly surpassing his teachers, it was clear the young god was destined to work the forge.

Decades after his exile, the grown Hephaestus would return to Olympus, bearing great gifts for his fellow gods. A winged helmet and shoes for Hermes, the Aegis for Zeus, Helios' chariot, Eros' bow, and even Aphrodite's famed girdle, for which he would earn her eye. But most impressive of

all was the grand golden throne he had crafted for the mother who had exiled him. Awed by the magnificence of the gift, Hera accepted.

This final gift however was cursed, and upon taking the throne, Hera found she could not, for all her might, stand back up from it. Laughing at his mothers' plight, Hephaestus struck the tiles before the throne with his hammer and in a flash was gone. Try as they might, the other Olympians could not free Hera from the throne and soon Hermes was dispatched to travel the world in search of Hephaestus. Finding him on the island of Lemnos, Hermes tried (albeit halfheartedly) in vain to convince the forgemaster to return to Olympus and free Hera, however even with the promise of a place among the Olympians the fellow trickster was rebuffed.

Zeus then decided to try a different tactic, dispatching Dionysus to treat with Hephaestus. The God of wine gathered his greatest Ambrosia and made for Lemnos. Once there, he shared with Hephaestus his own tale of betrayal at Hera's hands and how she had cursed him with madness, nearly destroying him due to her initial disgust at his and his follower's revelry. He explained that though he held great resentment towards her at first, he had moved past it in order to take his place among the other Olympians and he urged Hephaestus to do the same. Drunk on ambrosia and swayed by Dionysus' story, he agreed to return.

Too drunk to make it on his own, Dionysus led him back to Olympus on the back of the Divine Mule. Once they arrived, and Hephaestus sobered, he was brought to Hera. Entering the throne chambers they found Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades, the three brothers marveling at the throne's craftsmanship, much to Hera's annoyance. Before the curse was lifted, Zeus made Hera and Hephaestus agree to a truce — no further vengeance would be sought by either side for past transgressions. Both gods agreed, and before the lords of the Sky, Seas, and Underworld, swore to seek no further vengeance against one another. With the pact sealed, Hephaestus lifted the curse, at which time the throne crumbled to dust, freeing Hera while also unceremoniously dropping her to the floor.

Hephaestus would come to take his place as the Olympians' Forgemaster, crafting the greatest treasures of the Greco-Roman world. In time he would also come to wed Aphrodite. Though their passions once ran strong, they have become estranged in recent centuries, with Aphrodite preferring the company of Ares and mortal champions, while Hephaestus has found new romance with Aglaea, youngest of the Three Graces.

Hera/Juno

Youngest daughter of Cronus and Rhea, patron deity of the women, marriage, family, and childbirth, Hera is the wife of Zeus and Queen of the Gods. Hera is known to have conflict with many of the other Olympians, including several of her own children. She is also known to have inflicted harsh punishment on the mortal lovers of her husband Zeus and any children that these relations may have led to.

She attempted to have Dionysus killed twice, cast the infant Hephaestus from Olympus, cursed Leto to be unable to birth her twins, Apollo and Artemis, anywhere in the heavens or earth, turned the Libyan Queen Lamia into a sea serpent before butchering she and Zeus' children, and cursed the Nymph echo with the trait of mimicry.

She is also said to have driven the hero Heracles insane, an incident that ended with the death of his family by his own hands. Later she would do what she could to make each of his twelve labors more arduous than the last. Bitter resentment remained between the two until Heracles death.

She and Athena also, through an event known as the Judgement of Paris, would sow the seeds that plunged the Greeks and Trojans into war and threatened to tear the Greco Pantheon apart. This event would also lay the groundwork for the eventual Roman state. Little did the goddesses realize that the Trojan war and the events leading to it were an early attempt by Eris to weaken the pantheon and further the cause of Chaos.



Hestia/Vesta

First born of Chronos and Rhea, elder sister to Zeus, Hades, Poseidon, Hera and Demeter and the Goddess of the hearth.

Though far from the most powerful member of the pantheon, Hestia's place as first born is recognized within the worship of the pantheon's followers. Offerings or sacrifices to Hestia typically take place first in order of precedent.

Jupiter/Zeus

As lord of Olympus and patron deity of the Roman state, Jupiter stands at the head of the Greco-Roman Pantheon. Though first worshiped as Zeus by the Mycenaean Greeks, the Romans have since adopted Jupiter as the chief deity of their state religion. Having venerated him above all other gods, the Romans believe that they have earned his divine favor, owing their widespread success to his power and glory. Though they are not the first, and certainly not the only culture to worship him, the Romans continue to build great monuments and statues in Jupiter's image in order to prove their worthiness and devotion above all others.

Sky Father

After overthrowing his cruel father, the titan Saturn, Jupiter and his two brothers elected to divide the rulership of the cosmos between them. Neptune would rule the vast seas, Pluto the chthonic depths of the underworld, and Jupiter the endless skies. From the peak of Mount Olympus, Jupiter holds court, with the gods of the Greco-Roman Pantheon each ruling domains of their own.

Though most often concerned with the affairs and grievances of the gods, Jupiter's interactions with the realm of mortals cannot be ignored. A prolific philanderer, Jupiter's many relations with mortal women have been the source of countless conflicts, most especially with Juno, Queen of the Gods, whose cruel punishments are often meted out against her husband's demi-god offspring.

Two of the most famous Greek heroes, Perseus and Heracles, were mortal sons of Jupiter, and despite initial attempts by Juno to hinder them, would found lasting dynasties and accomplish

many great deeds with the occasional aid of their deific father.

Thankfully, not all of his interactions with mortals were motivated by lust, with Mercury often acting as intermediary in his dealings, providing aid or counsel to those of particular interest or worth. When he deigns to personally appear before mortal eyes, it is most often in disguise, with his immense powers capable of transforming his godly form into any number of more palatable shapes.

Blessing of Kings

As it concerns the Romans, one of his most notable encounters was with Numa Pompilius. Shortly after the disappearance of Romulus, the senate sought to elect a new ruler. Though the Romans and the Sabines had come together under the rule of Romulus, they struggled to reach a collective decision.

Finally, after almost a year without a king, the senate chose to elevate Numa of the Sabines to the position, but to their shock, he refused. As an impassioned populace demanded a suitable successor to the legendary Romulus, Numa finally agreed under one condition: he would consult with the gods. Only with their blessing would he take the throne.

Approaching Olympus, Numa prostrated himself and requested the judgment of the gods. None other than Jupiter himself descended from his heavenly seat, bringing with him the rumble of thunder and torrential storms. Despite the terror he must have felt in the presence of such power, Numa remained stoic, and thus received the blessing of the King of the Gods.

Returning to Rome, Numa ascended to the throne with the blessing of gods and mortals alike, beginning an ancient tradition which persists even now. Each time a ruler is chosen, it is Jupiter's blessing that holds the most weight. To go against his divine will could prove disastrous, with his wrath being a terrible thing to behold.

Mars/Ares

Mars, known to the Thracians who first worshiped him as Ares, is the Olympian god of courage, violence, and war. With the notable exception of the Spartans, Mars is not well-liked by the Greeks. In stark contrast to Minerva, who represents such glorious aspects of war as tactics and battle strategy, Mars represents the brutal horrors of war in the form of chaotic, unadulterated violence and bloodshed. Finding new respect and many scores of new followers amongst the Romans, Mars has taken to his role as patron deity of Rome's legions with zeal.



Mars, Venus, and Vulcan

It is no secret that the marriage of Venus and Vulcan is not a particularly loving relationship. The ever-lascivious Venus, not content with the god of the forge's matrimonial ministrations, inevitably sought another partner that would give her the attention she felt she deserved. Mars, beneath his heavy armor and callous exterior is said to be among the most handsome of the gods, and soon caught the eye of the goddess of love. What started as a simmering mutual attraction blossomed into a legendary love affair, with the open secret of their clandestine relationship obvious to most of Olympus.



Vulcan, deeply-focused in his work, remained blissfully unaware of his wife's devious dealings with the god of war until Mercury chose to reveal to him the truth. Vulcan remained stoic, but a cold rage brewed just beneath the surface. With Mercury's assistance, the two devised a scheme that would ensnare the illicit lovers.

Announcing that he would be traveling in search of a rare ore, Vulcan made a show of leaving Mount Olympus for all to see. The moment he was gone Mars wasted no time in attending Venus, but no sooner did they lay in Venus' bed the trap was sprung. A coiling length of Vulcan-forged

chain fell about the entwined gods and wrapped them tightly to the frame. Even the combined might of the two Olympians was no match for Vulcan's sturdy craftsmanship.

Mercury, having announced to the other gods that Mars and Venus might be in need of assistance, pulled back the curtains to reveal their shame for all to see. Feigning shock, Mercury quickly retrieved Vulcan, who wordlessly freed the two before returning to his forge.

Proud Mars, unwilling to stand in humiliation before his peers, fled to Thrace, remaining there for some years as their patron deity. The Olympians, for their part, still remember the humbling of Mars and Venus, though they might hesitate to bring the matter up in their company, even as rumors of a renewed affair persist.

In Rome, as in Thrace, Mars sees an opportunity to return himself to his days of glory. Diving headfirst into any conflict, Mars hopes to erase the shame of his past, once more becoming loved and feared by all.

Mercury/Hermes

Few gods can claim to be as versatile as swift-footed Mercury. Known to the Greeks as Hermes, the sheer number of domains and roles under his purview is staggering, perhaps fitting for a deity nearly capable of being everywhere at once. Mercury is the god of messengers, wanderers, liars, thieves, heroes, merchants, shepherds, athletes, trade, commerce, contracts, friendship, fertility, games, luck, wit, mischief, deception, guile, grace, speed, invention, sleep, dreams, public speaking, roads, boundaries, medicine, and music. His usefulness to the other Olympian gods cannot be overstated as he gracefully leaps between various roles as the need arises, serving as herald, messenger, spy, scout, and guide. Also worshiped as a chthonic deity, Mercury is capable of effortlessly transitioning between the worlds of the living and the dead, an ability which he utilizes to great effect as a psychopomp— a guide for the lost souls of the dead.



Excellence in Infancy

From the earliest days of his existence, it was clear that Mercury was destined to accomplish great things, but to call him merely precocious would be an understatement. As the product of Jupiter's secret affair with Maia (the eldest of the seven daughters of Atlas) Mercury's birth was concealed in a humble cave from the watchful eyes of the queen of the gods, as Juno was known to exact cruel revenge on those who shared her husband's affections.

The very day he was born the infant Mercury learned to walk, sneaking out of the cave as his mother slept. Finding the rough terrain unpleasing to walk upon, he collected reeds which he shaped into his first invention— sandals, which he immediately strapped to his feet.

As he walked on, he discovered an empty tortoise shell, which gave him an idea for another invention, but he had grown hungry and would need to collect more materials to realize his design. Soon coming upon a herd of radiant cattle, Mercury took up a fallen branch and began to usher them back towards the cave, brushing away their tracks as he went.

Apollo, returning to his sacred field to discover the divine cattle missing, quickly took to the skies upon his solar chariot. With no discernible trail to follow, the god of the sun was at a loss until a strange sound filled his ears. Following the sound to its source, Apollo left his chariot behind and stepped through a cave entrance to find Mercury, surrounded by the missing cattle and playing a stringed instrument crafted from a tortoise shell while fresh meat roasted over an open flame.

More perplexed than angry, Apollo complimented the young god on his music before explaining that the cattle belonged to him. The punishment for the theft of divine cattle was severe, but Apollo offered a trade: the new musical instrument in exchange for the cow that Mercury had already slaughtered. Mercury accepted and the musical instrument which Apollo claimed would come to be called the Lyre.

When Mercury was grown, Apollo brought him before the other Olympians, recounting the tale of his cunning and ingenuity. Jupiter, recognizing his own offspring, accepted him with open arms

and it was not long before Mercury had proven himself an indispensable member of the pantheon countless times over.

Neptune/Poseidon

Neptune, one of the three sons of the titans Saturn and Opis, rules the vast oceanic depths as Olympian god of the sea. He is known to the Greeks as Poseidon, but for the Romans that have adopted his worship, Neptune now fills an important military role as divine patron of their formidable cavalry and navy. Though responsible for the creation of many of the creatures of the deep, Neptune's favorite creation is a beast of the land— the horse.

Titanomachy

As a member of the third generation of Greco-Roman deities, Neptune was consumed whole by his Titanic father immediately upon his birth. Trapped within Saturn's immense corpus alongside his brothers and sisters, Neptune grew to adulthood before being freed by a plot hatched by his mother, Opis, and Jupiter — the only future Olympian to be spared from their father's cruel appetites.

The Cyclopes, having been freed from the Titans' captivity by Jupiter, forged great weapons, not least of which — the Trident — would come to serve as the symbol of Neptune's power. With Trident in hand, Neptune fought alongside the other Olympian gods and their allies in a war which would come to be called the Titanomachy. The Trident of Neptune was capable of shaking the very earth when thrust into the ground, and with its power, the young god proved his worth against the forces of the Titans when he faced one of their most formidable champions.

Briareus, said to be the most powerful of the Hecatoncheires, was the only member of his

Cyclopes and Hecatoncheires

Long before Jupiter led the Olympians in their war with the Titans, Saturn sought to overthrow his own father, Uranus, with the aid of a number of monstrous allies. The Cyclopes— one-eyed giants with a propensity towards the art of metalworking— would forge an indestructible sickle which would serve as Saturn’s primary weapon against his father, while the massive, hundred-handed Hecatoncheires would each do the bloody work of an army of swordsmen.

Though they proved instrumental in Saturn’s successful coup, the ambitious Titan moved swiftly to remove any potential threats to his hard-won power. In a stinging betrayal, Saturn gathered the monsters that had so recently fought beside him with the promise of a great reward before imprisoning them in the chthonic realm of Tartarus. There they remained, until Jupiter freed them to serve in his own war with the very Titan that had betrayed them.

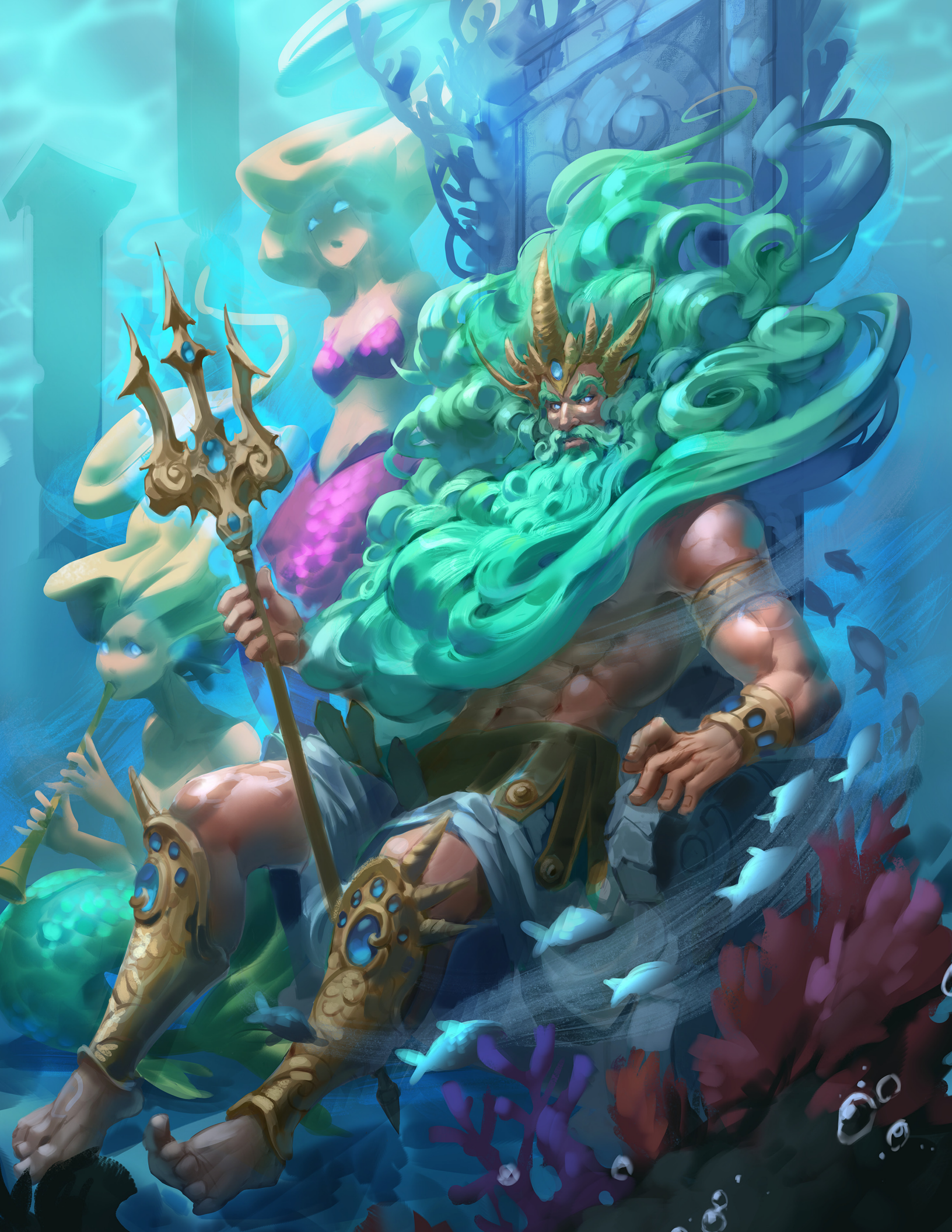
Jupiter’s thunderbolts, the Trident of Neptune, and the Helmet of Pluto, were each gifts of the Cyclopes given as thanks for their freedom. The Hecatoncheires, save Briareus, would fight alongside the Olympians in the Titanomachy, and, after their battles were won, elected to return to Tartarus alongside Pluto, acting as chthonic prison guards for the defeated Titans

monstrous brood that sided against the Olympians during the Titanomachy. Remaining loyal to Saturn even after having been imprisoned by him and freed by Jupiter, Briareus hoped to regain the trust of the Titans by defeating the upstart gods.

In a clash of literally earthshaking proportions, Neptune brought his Trident to bear against the hundred swords of Briareus, each blow sundering blades and tearing great fissures into the earth. Neptune, unable to pierce Briareus’ Cyclopean armor, found himself outmatched by the hundred-handed giant and, pushed to the brink of defeat, drove his Trident into the stone beneath their feet.

As the seaside cliff that had been their battleground crumbled into the ocean below, Neptune wrestled Briareus beneath the waves, enduring countless swordstrikes before his opponent finally began to drown. The weight of his immense armor, so effective at repelling Neptune’s Trident, proved his undoing as he rapidly sank to the ocean floor.

Emerging from the deep with the body of Briareus in tow, Neptune would honor his foe with a shoreside tomb which stands to this day, commemorating not just Neptune’s victory, but also the discovery of his own aquatic affinity — a penchant Jupiter would seek to foster when it came to time to divvy up the rulership of the realms.



Rise and Fall of Atlantis

Neptune, though ostensibly married to the goddess Salacia, is not particularly fond of the concept of monogamy, finding himself unwilling to resist the temptation to pursue a long list of mortal and deific lovers. Numerous demi-gods and monsters have been born of these unions, with Neptune's exploits rivaling even his famously promiscuous brother, Jupiter.

One such mortal lover, Cleito, bore Neptune ten children, each of whom would grow to rule a portion of the vast island of Atlantis. These initial rulers, demi-gods all, would build a thriving, prosperous civilization some millennia before the rise of Rome.

For centuries, the city-states of Atlantis would know peace and plenty, the resource-rich island providing everything the people could need. Fabulous monuments and temples were built to rival even those of the pyramid builders of Egypt, and bustling trade between the ten Atlantean realms ensured the iniquities of poverty never touched even the lowliest among them.

At its center, a series of canals formed concentric rings surrounding an ornate temple complex dedicated to Neptune, from which the god of the sea himself was said to sometimes hold court. Freshwater flowed freely from the temple, and, distributed by aqueducts not unlike those currently in Rome, ensured any citizen of Atlantis had plenty to drink.

This Atlantean golden age would not last indefinitely, however. As time went on, the blood of Neptune grew thin amongst the realms' rulers, and the Lord of the Sea would grace his temple with far less frequency. The people became increasingly decadent, with growing greed leading to internal strife. For the first time since its founding, the Atlanteans saw fit to raise armies, ostensibly to dissuade each realm from aggressions against the others, but soon new treaties were drafted and broken just as swiftly.

One realm, populated by the descendants of Cleito's firstborn, Atlan, succeeded in subjugating the other nine realms in a war that shook the

foundations of their civilization. Not content with their victory, nor the state of their now war-torn island, the Atlanteans looked outwards, building vessels of war to aid in a new campaign of aggressive foreign expansion.

Assembling a fleet to rival any in the known world, the Atlanteans set out with a singular goal: conquest. Sweeping through the Mediterranean, the invaders slaughtered all they came into contact with, their unprepared and comparatively underdeveloped opponents proving no match. Their efforts, though devastating, were short-lived, however, as no sooner had they made landfall in Greece, did Neptune make his dissatisfaction with their recent behavior known. With a tremendous earthquake, the Atlanteans were turned back from their attempted invasion, retreating to their ships only to find themselves swept out to sea by an immense tidal wave.

Furious and with their naval strength crippled, the Atlanteans limped home. Upon their arrival, the humiliated force marched past the ring of canals to the very center of the island. The Atlantean Temple of Neptune had remained untouched over the course of the long war for control of the ten realms as one of the few sacred places common to all of the conflict's belligerents. That would change, however, as the Atlantean soldiers renounced their god and brazenly desecrated his temple, making it known that they would not idly suffer what they perceived as Neptune's betrayal.

Neptune, already disappointed in his errant children, was filled with an unyielding rage. As the temple crumbled around them, the Atlanteans knew they had made a serious error, but even as they begged for forgiveness the destruction continued. In a single night the great monuments and wonders of Atlantis were erased, along with all of its knowledge and splendor. As the entire island and all its inhabitants sank beneath the cruel waves, Neptune wept.

For years, the area around the sunken cities remained impassable, condemning any ship that sailed its roiling waters to an aquatic grave. Now,

even this last grave marker of Atlantis is gone, the final resting place of the fabled civilization lost to time. Some brave sailors still search for some trace of it, combing dusty records in hopes of locating the untold wealth of the sons and daughters of Cleito, but despite rumors to the contrary, no claims of successful Atlantean expeditions have yet been proven.

Pluto/Hades

Lord of the underworld and Olympian god of the dead, Pluto rules the chthonic realms of Erebus, Tartarus, and Elysium, as well as the rivers and shadowlands that constitute everything in between. This vast subterranean territory is collectively referred to as Hades, the same name by which he is known to the Greeks. Eldest of the three sons of Saturn, the rule of the cosmos could have been his by birthright, yet Pluto bears no resentment towards his younger brothers that now dwell in the sun; the darkness of the underworld suits him well enough.

Persephone/ Proserpina

Save Mercury, the Olympian gods rarely visit Pluto's chthonic kingdom, though Pluto occasionally attends the gatherings of the gods at Mount Olympus. It was at one such gathering that Pluto's brothers began to boast of their latest romantic conquests. Jupiter and Neptune were, of course, notorious philanderers, and thought it strange that Pluto remained unwed. At his brothers' urgings, the lord of the underworld began to reluctantly survey the gathering for romantic prospects.

None caught his eye save Persephone, who in stark contrast to his cold and stoic demeanor responded to his greetings with warmth and humor. Sensing an immediate connection, Pluto's reservations melted away, but their growingly flirtatious interaction was cut short as Persephone's mother, Demeter, intervened.

Despite her daughter's protests, Demeter, recognizing the beginnings of their mutual attraction, insisted that the time had come for them to return to the surface. Persephone relented



to her mother's wishes, but not before leaving Pluto with a parting gift— a single flower in bloom.

Lovestruck, Pluto returned to his brothers and asked for their aid in preparing a proper marriage proposal. Jupiter, overjoyed at his brother's change in opinion towards love, agreed to use his position as king of the gods to immediately authorize the marriage. Neptune, however, pointed out that Demeter would never consent to giving away her daughter, and insisted that there was only one way for the marriage to succeed— kidnapping.

Outfitting Pluto with a golden chariot and four immortal black horses, Jupiter and Neptune once again impressed upon their brother the necessity of their plan before sending him onwards to the surface. Persephone, who had been picking flowers in one of Demeter's gardens, let out a scream as the idyllic serenity of the pastoral paradise was broken by the thundering of hooves and a great shaking of the earth. Snatched from the field by the strong arm of Pluto, Persephone was carried down into the abyss as a massive fissure split the ground where she had stood, closing shut as quickly as it had appeared.

Soon, the golden chariot descended to the underworld, and as he removed his helmet Persephone recognized her captor. Below, the sheer vastness of the chthonic realms filled her with awe as they passed over Erebus and the rivers Acheron and Styx. He showed her Elysium, where the souls of the noble dead wandered fields not unlike those she had left behind, and he showed her Tartarus, where the wicked are punished for all time. Persephone, never before having seen such terrible splendor, became enamored with this strange new world in spite of herself.

Finally arriving at the throne room, Pluto knelt and apologized for the nature of her visit before asking for her hand in marriage, promising to never again mistreat her, regardless of her choice.

Persephone, not immediately providing her answer, began to wander the great stone hall before stopping at Pluto's black throne. With a warm laugh she remarked that they would soon need two.



Celtic Pantheon

Cailleach

The Cailleach has many names across the isles — the Old Crone, the Woods Witch, the Veiled One, the Divine Hag, the Queen of Winter — though different tribes may know her by different titles, all Celts pay her their respects.

The Cailleach holds a special place in the loose Celtic Pantheon. A creation deity, she is credited both by the people and her fellow gods as the creator of the isles and the progenitor of the great forests.

The Cailleach is also seen as the deity most linked to sovereignty and rulership. So it is that any Celtic tribal leader that wishes to be truly recognized must seek out and gain the acceptance of the Cailleach. No Celtic leader has ever ruled more than a year without her blessing.

Though described and often seen as a diminutive old woman, this only tells half the tale, for The Cailleach only truly exists for half the year. During the Spring and Summer, she is transformed into a beautiful young woman, who, while powerful, lacks the control over nature that her other-self possesses. In the fall she will transform back into her elder crone appearance and regain her control over the frosts of winter. This cycle pairs oppositely with that of Brigid, the Exalted Queen of Summer, who gains her powers in the spring and loses them in the fall.

Despite being loath to partake in combat the Cailleach has not sat idly by while the Romans

conquer the Isles and lay waste to her proud and ancient forests. Using her mastery of winter, she has directed numerous storms and flash-frosts across the Roman controlled territory.

The Roman historian Atticus has even stated that the Romans have lost more soldiers to the freezing elements than they have in direct combat with the Celts tribes. This makes the winter months especially harrowing times on the Isles, with the Romans clinging to their walled cities as the very nature of the Isles rejects their occupation.

Pantheonic Magic

Priests, Paladins and Clerics receive their powers from the gods they worship. While this power typically originates from a specific god, the overall power of a deity's given Pantheon also impacts these blessings. If the head of a Pantheon dies or becomes weakened, a new god will typically ascend to their place, but should the Pantheonic head surrender their powers to a rival Pantheon this joint power dissipates and the remaining gods will find themselves weakened and isolated.



Cernunnos

Though a powerful and respected deity among the Celts, Cernunnos is none the less an outsider to the Isles. A mainland deity, he was forced out of Gaul during the Roman conquests nearly two centuries ago and settled with those of his people who had fled Roman domination.

Since that time, he has made a name for himself in the hearts and minds of the other Celtic tribes as a protector of the forests and wilds of their Isles. As with many others his name can vary tribe to tribe — The Lord of the Wilds, the God of the Wild Places, the Horned God — all of these titles are now used to describe the being that is Cernunnos.

Cernunnos has the look of a handsome if slightly older man with a pair of large antlers, often seen with a Torc in one hand and another around his neck. He is most often found in the groves of ancient Oaks, with which he has a close affinity. While the exact details are murky, it is known that many witches view Cernunnos as their patron and he is also known (though only in hushed voices) as the God of the Witches.

Cernunnos is especially renowned for his Conjuración magic. Able to summons vast swarms of vines, roots and deadly pollens he has made the forests themselves the enemy of the Romans who must always be wary, even in seemingly pacified groves. For even if the local population has been brought to heel, the forests have surely not been.

Though he was a peaceful deity back in Gaul the loss of his lands to the Roman conquerors has left him jaded and bitter. He is prepared to do whatever he must to push the Romans from the Isles.

He, aside from Cu Chulainn, has taken the most prominent role in the war against the Romans, leading strikes against their patrols and launching attacks on legions as they march between the walled cities.



A detailed illustration of Cu Chulainn, a Celtic warrior. He is depicted from the waist up, shirtless, with intricate blue and white tattoos on his chest and arms. He has long, wavy brown hair and a beard. He holds a long, ornate sword in his right hand, which has a golden hilt with blue and yellow details. His left arm is raised, showing a silver armband. He is wearing a large, ornate silver breastplate and a skirt with a blue and white pattern. The background is a dark, rocky, and forested landscape with some green foliage at the bottom.

Cu Chulainn

Eire's greatest champion, Cu Chulainn hails from the north of the island. He has spent much of his life traveling Ulster and Alba training with the greatest Celtic warriors, living and dead, in order to become the most powerful defender of the Isles, and a hero of justice for the Celtic people.

Though first made famous after slaying the Hound of Culain, a massive wolfhound ten times his weight, Cu Chulainn is most known for his victory during the Táin Bó Cúailnge in which Medb, queen of Conchatta and devotee to The Morrigan, launched an attack against Ulster with the intent of stealing the divinely gifted bull, Donn Cuailnge.

A curse from The Morrigan caused the men of Ulster to be taken by a crippling illness and left the borders to be defended by the only two who resisted the spell, Cu Chulainn and his charioteer Láeg. Though their hit and run tactics killed many among Medb's army they could not halt its advance.

After meeting the opposing army at a ford, Cu Chulainn issued a challenge of single combat. Believing one man could never defeat all their champions, Medb and The Morrigan agreed. But after nine days of constant challenges the champions of Conchatta floated dead down the river, slain by Gáe Bulg, the spear of Cu Chulainn. Though he stopped the advance in Ulster, Donn Cuailnge would none the less be captured by a group of scouts that took advantage of the Battle of Nine Days.

The Roman historian Atticus notes that Cu Chulainn, while a deity to the Celts, would only fit the description of a demi-god in the eyes of the Roman, Egyptian, or Parthian gods. Though his patronage is still a mystery to all, even himself, Atticus postulates that he must be the child of Dagda and a Celtic woman.

Atticus compares descriptions of Chulainn's martial prowess with that of the great Heracles, both a testament to his skill and to his mortality despite all his power.

Though Cu Chulainn is considered a warrior of honor he does hide a terrible secret, the *riastrad* — or blood rage. When overcome by this frenzy Cu Chulainn loses all sense of himself and those around him, striking down friend and foe alike.

Once this frenzy even caused him to turn on Láeg, nearly striking down his life-long companion as they rode, he was only stopped by the intervention of Liath Macha who, sensing the attack, knocked Cu Chulainn from the back of the chariot.

Dagda

First among equals and last king of the Tuatha Dé Danann, The Dagda is the nominal head of the loosely aligned Celtic Pantheon, though his direct control over the other gods is, for all intents and purposes non-existent, his words still hold great sway among Celtic gods and men alike. He is known across the isles as The Great God, a reflection of skill and mastery over many domains more than his personality.

The Dagda is said to have a hand in every one of the Celtic domains including life and death, though he is most commonly known for being the patron deity of the isle's druids.

The Dagda appears as an older, though somewhat handsome man, his appearance closely resembling that of Cernunnos save for far more unkempt hair and a shaggy goatee. A patron of the arts, he is often found performing on his harp, *Uaithne*, both in the settlements and the wilds.

Powerful though he is, The Dagda hides a great weakness: a wound inflicted on him by the Fomorian Cethlenn during the second battle of Magh Tuiredh. Though he survived the battle, the cursed wound has festered and grown over the centuries and its toll is starting to show.

He is known to carry the staff *Lorg Mór*, a powerful magical artifact that can slay dozens of men with but a drop of its arcane power. The staff holds another lesser-known ability however, a touch from its handle can resurrect anyone or anything it touches. The Roman Historian Atticus has found mention that it can even resurrect those killed by the gods, something that if true would make it truly unique in the world.

Though his home isle of Eire has yet to face the Legions of Rome, The Dagda has been incensed to see the wanton destruction and deforestation that has plagued Albion. While he has not personally engaged in combat against the Romans, he has given his blessings to numerous druids and warriors who fight in his name.

The Morrigan

The Morrigan, commonly known as the phantom queen, is a deity little spoken of in the isles. This is due to her domains primarily concerning war and fate, things the common folk would rather keep well away from.

One of the Goddess Ernmas' three daughters, The Morrigan, then known as Anand, grew up with her two sisters Badb and Macha. A trio of warrior sisters, they forged their place in the Pantheon across a thousand battlefields.

Unlike her sisters, who preferred the thrill of the battlefield, Anand's true calling would be in diving into the Sea of Fate to see visions of futures to come, almost all of these involving the violent deaths or mass destructions of various Celtic warriors and settlements. Fates she also felt compelled to see brought to fruition.

It was in the deepest depths of the Sea that Anand would discover a presence, a being, not an individual, but a force of pure primordial chaos. Speaking from everywhere at once, it said:

"All must return to one, one must return to all."

And with that Anand was back in the Isles with but one goal: to see every living being returned to one in a state of endless roiling chaos. So committed is she that The Morrigan would even go on to consume her sister Macha after the first battle of Magh Tuiredh.

Much to his shock and horror, the Roman historian Atticus also found sigils and effigies that link The Morrigan to another deity closely associated with Chaos: Discordia.

Atticus feared that these discoveries — along with recent disturbing rumors about Set out of Egypt — may point to a deeper chaos conspiracy, one that crosses not only political boundaries but the Pantheons themselves.





Epona

Epona is an outcast among the Celtic gods, considered by the others to be little more than an up jumped traitor. For Epona alone among the Celtic gods has granted her favors to the Roman invaders. That a young and growing Celtic god would do such a thing has sent shockwaves through the Pantheon.

However, the reason for this is that Epona is not who she truly claims to be, or at least, she hasn't always been. She was born Macha, Goddess of war and sister to Anand and Badb.

Macha

Little is remembered by the common folk of Macha aside from her relation to The Morrigan and Badb.

During the wars against the Fomorians, Macha would face off against Balor, husband of Cethlenn, during the first battle of Magh Tuiredh. Though she outclassed him in their physical confrontation Macha proved no match once he unleashed his destructive eye. Though the wounded Balor fled, Macha was severely ravaged. The Morrigan managed to reach the wounded Macha before any surviving Fomorians could finish her.

Towering over her wounded sister The Morrigan felt neither sorrow nor grief, for she knew this was fate and that she

had only one course of action, to devour Macha's being and continue to use her power of war to bring about the final fate. Weakened as she was, Macha could only briefly flee before her sister hunted her down and consumed her war essence.

Leaving her sister where she fell deep in the bogs, The Morrigan reported to the Tuatha Dé Danann that Balor had struck Macha down, a lie made easier by Balor's own belief in it.

This would not be Macha's end however, for much like The Morrigan Macha had power within a domain outside of pure war, she was also the patron of horses and cavalry, and though severely weakened she survived and went deep into hiding, knowing her sister would easily finish her were she to discover the truth.

Though she spent centuries in hiding, Macha slowly emerged under the name Epona, a minor deity on the very southern fringe of Albion. It was this that gave her contact with the Romans during their first incursions. Seeing an opportunity, Epona granted her favor to the Romans (equestrians themselves) in several early battles and her cult quickly spread. Though concentrated primarily in Roman Britain, Epona's worship has spread across the empire with several temples now in Gaul and, controversially, a small shrine in Rome itself. The loose authority that makes up the Celtic Pantheon and the opportunity to use their own Pantheonic Magic against the Celts, has caused the Greco-Roman gods to allow this for now. In time however Epona will be expected to formally bind herself to the Greco-Roman Pantheon or face expulsion from their lands — a death sentence for her.



Gobannus

A Gaulish deity originally, Gobannus now finds himself a refugee in The Isles. A rarity among the Celtic gods, he is a god of smiths and the forge. Forced out after the Roman conquests, his original lands now sit under the control of the Greco-Roman Pantheon. Using his specialty in bronzeworking Gobannus hopes to strengthen the remaining free Celts against the encroachment of the Romans.

Gwydion fab Dôn

A magician, trickster, and hero to the Britons, Gwydion began his life a mortal man before ascending. No stranger to war, Gwydion has taken a frontline role in the defense against the Romans.

Sucellus

Originally from what is today Roman Hispania, Sucellus was forced from his homeland like many others in the face of the Roman conquest of the peninsula. A god of agriculture and wine, he is by nature a jovial man. Though his joy has been tempered by the loss of his land and people he still seeks to spread cheer among those of his adopted home.

Telesphorus

The furthest from home, Telesphorus originally hailed from what is now Roman Anatolia far to the east. The encroachment of the Romans saw him displaced and wandering until he found his way to The Isles. Before his exile he was worshiped by many of the Greeks of Anatolia as well. A renowned healer, he is known to be quiet and stoic, but friendly to those who he treats.



Chinese Pantheon



The Legend of Pangu

The myths state that Pangu, He Who Was First to Stand, slumbered alone in the empty world for eons. All that existed was the cosmic egg, the chaotic and primordial representation of the Taii, Yin and Yang. When he awoke into nothingness Pangu set to creating the world. Separating the comic Yin and Yang with a sash of his great axe Pangu would use them to create the Earth (Yin) and Sky (Yang.)

For the next 18,000 years Pangu raised the sky from the earth, pushing it higher each day. Once the sky was in place Pangu died. His breath becoming the wind and air, his blood the rivers and seas, his eyes the sun and moon, his body the land and animals.

The most important being to spring forth from his sacrifice was Hua Hsu, a mysterious and little known being who proved one of the most powerful to spring forth from the body of Pangu. Hua Hsu would make her home in the lower reaches of the Yellow River. It is here that she would birth and raise two of the three Sovereigns, Fuxi the Heavenly Sovereign and Nuwa the Earthly Sovereign. Her time after this is little known and today, she finds herself with few followers and fewer shrines and temples.

Though long dead the veneration of Pangu is widespread across the former imperial territories alongside his grandchildren Fuxi and Nuwa and there Humanly counterpart Shennong. In recent years veneration of these beings has been stifled in the Kingdom under Dai of Wei who has chosen to embrace a new cult to the Yellow Emperor focused on centralization and order.

The Three and The Five

Fuxi and Nuwa represent two of the Three Sovereigns, personifying the heavens and the earth respectively. Legend states that Nuwa created the first humans from the mud of the Yellow River while Fuxi instilled them with the skills to survive and thrive. They stand along-side Shennong, the deity personification of Human beings themselves. They who served as the first three sovereign leaders of the Chinese people. Together these three have found themselves the most widely and highly venerated deities across the former empire.

Long have they held a steady alliance with the Three Pure Ones, highly revered Taoist deities who in life as men had paid their own reverence to the Three Sovereigns.

During the Imperial era they also stood alongside, and above, The Five Emperors, former men ascended to the ranks of the divine. Today however that covenant is broken, The Five Emperors having become the Wufang Shangdi — Five Forms of the Highest Deity. Under the leadership of the Yellow Emperor the Five no longer recognize Fuxi as the Heavenly Sovereign, declaring themselves the Five Faces of the Highest Heavenly Deity.

Though still more powerful than any of the five individually Fuxi and Nuwa have felt a slight wane in their power as the cult of the Five is quickly spreading under Dai of Wei. They worry that if direct action is not taken against this sudden surge that they may find themselves replaced by the very children they once created and taught.

Fuxi: Heavenly Sovereign

Fuxi and his sister-wife Nuwa, sovereigns of the Heaven and Earth, progenitors of the Chinese people and, if the myths are believed, creators of all mankind across the world.

Whether he created them or not, Fuxi instilled great knowledge and skill into the ancient peoples of China and has shown time and time again that he cares deeply for their wellbeing, teaching them to hunt, to fish to write and to plan.

His mission to teach the humans how to fish for themselves did not go unnoticed however. Another powerful being born from the body of Pangu known as the Dragon King had dominion over the animals of the rivers and seas. Angry at what he saw as an attack on his people the Dragon King demanded Fuxi tell his people they were not allowed to use their hands to catch from his rivers and seas. Despondent Fuxi wondered the land hoping to find new way to feed his people. On this journey he encountered a jade spider spinning a massive web, caught within it were bugs and birds of all sizes. This sparked a new idea in Fuxi, if the humans were disallowed from fishing with their hands, they would build webs, or nets. Fuxi instilled his children with this new knowledge, enraging the Dragon King and starting a rivalry that still goes today.

Fuxi is also responsible for introducing The Bagua, the eight trigrams that make up the fundamental principles of the heaven and earth. Fuxi was also responsible for elevating the Eight Immortals, one to represent each trigram.



Nuwa: Earthly Sovereign

Nuwa and her brother-husband Fuxi were responsible for the creation of the first human beings according to the priests. Though themselves human-like from the waist up they both had long snake-like bodies fifteen feet in length. Their children would walk upon legs however, as many of the animals spawned from Pangu did.

The first humans were created carefully, each one specially made from the mud of the Yellow River. It is these first humans that would become the nobles and wealthy of the world. After a time Nuwa grew impatient with her work and dipped her scarf into the mud, flinging it overhead the mud that fell from the scarf would become the lower class and peasantry of the world.

Nuwa stood as Sovereign of China after the retirement of Fuxi who wished to move beyond to the heavenly plane. During her reign she was known as Empress Nuwa. A fierce warrior Empress who leads her people in defense against neighboring threats. Though the Dragon King never took up arms there were others who sought what Nuwa's children had. Hai Shu, known as the Bronze Beetle, led his people in war against Nuwa.

Easily outmatched and trapped upon the mountain of Nuwa and Fuxi, Hai Shu believed himself forever shamed for losing to a woman and begged for death. Nuwa however offered him mercy and to ad his people to her own. Unable to handle what he saw as the ultimate shame Hai Shu split his own head upon the holy bamboo of Fuxi and used it to let out a scream that tore a hole in the sky itself flooding the earth and killing all those save for the soldiers currently with Nuwa on the mountain.

She would spend the next month repairing the hole in the sky, filling it with the five colored stones, Yellow, Red, White, Blue, Black, not knowing the repercussions to come from this millennia later.

Though her children would survive Nuwa blamed herself for the flood that killed so many. Deciding it was her time Nuwa ascended to be with her lover Fuxi and left the sovereignty in the hands of Shennong.



Shennong: Human Sovereign

Shennong's origins are clouded in mystery far more so than the heavenly and earthly sovereigns that came before. It is believed that like their mother and the Dragon King Shennong was born from the body of Pangu. What is known is that he came to power after Nuwa, hand selected by her to succeed in she and her brother's place. He also already held the title Yan Di, Flame Emperor, a title held by his son, the Red Emperor.

Shennong greatly expanded upon the teachings of Nuwa and Fuxi, moving the people beyond a pastoral hunter-gather society and into the beginnings of civilization. It was Shennong who introduced the plow and hoe, irrigation and well systems, farmers markets and even the twenty-four solar term calendar.

It was also Shennong who introduced medicine to the people. Teaching them to grow the blessed herbs and perform the incantations needed to heal the sick and wounded.

Shennong would continue to lead the former tribe of Fuxi and Nuwa for several centuries. By this time mankind had spread and more than one tribe of humans now called China home. It was one of these tribes' led by the Yellow Emperor who would finally end the reign of the Sovereigns.

It was at the Battle of Banquan that the Flame Emperor knelt to the Yellow Emperor, continuing his leadership of the tribe but paying tribute to the Yellow Emperor.

Disgusted by what he saw as weakness of Shennong's former lieutenants, Chiyu, set about taking control of his own tribes in the south. Eventually he would lead the Nine Tribes against Shennong. Unable to defend his people Shennong turned to his old enemy the Yellow Emperor and begged his help to save his people. The Yellow Emperor would lead a war that lasted more than ten years culminating in the Battle of Zhuolu in which he would personally slay Chiyu.

Shennong then realized the Yellow Emperor was truly the leader of the many tribes and stepped aside, integrating his tribe into that of the Yellow Emperor and declaring him the one true Emperor. The Yellow Emperor would in turn honor Shennong, ordering his veneration alongside that of Fuxi and Nuwa, while allowing his son to retain the honorific title, Yan Di.



The Eight Immortals

The Eight Immortals represent humans that were accepted by the deities and granted great power and immortality, though they are not true deities and must act more directly if they wish to assist those who offer prayer or sacrifice to their shrines. Respected as ideals of what human kind can achieve the immortals receive veneration though rarely outright worship. Apart from both the deities and the people the Eight make their home in the Bohai Sea on Mount Penglai.

He Xiangnu

Born somewhere along the Yangzi River into a very poor family her father was a strong believer in the Tao, instilling this belief within his daughter. After a divine encounter with a yet unknown deity, He Xiangnu began a spiritual fast replacing food with powdered mica. Though she grew weaker and weaker she continued her fast even against her father's wishes until one day, on the verge of death, she was ascended to the heavens and granted immortality.

Her symbol is the lotus flower and he cultivate a special type of these flower on Mount Penglai, able to heal one, both physically and mentally, these lotus flowers are highly sought after though offered willingly only to those he Xiangnu deems deserving.

Cao Guojiu

Though which is lost to history it is known Cao Guojiu was related to an Imperial dynasty. Unlike his brother Guojiu did not use his station in life and the protection of the Emperor to do as he pleased. When the weight of crimes came down and his brother arrested and executed for abuse of power Guojiu gave up his life of privilege to spend his days as a recluse in the mountains.

It was during this time he encountered the Immortals Lü Dongbin and Zhongli Quan who were very impressed with his determination to live an honorable life. They taught him secrets of divine magic and helped guide him towards the

Tao. Years after this encounter Fuxi would visit him, raising him up to the status of immortal alongside those who taught him. His symbol is an imperial seal.

Li Tieguai

Li Tieguai's origins as a man are unknown to many though it is believed he lived the life of a wandering beggar, a man of no great importance who never the less had a noble spirit. In actuality he was the apprentice to Laozi, author of the Tao Te Ching, first and guiding document to the Tao.

Of the Immortals he is the one most likely to walk among the people. Disguised as a hunched, ugly old man needing the use of a large walking stick he travels the vast lands looking for those poor and downtrodden in need of someone to fight for them. His symbol is an iron crutch.

Lan Caihe

Lan Caihe's life as a mortal was spent traveling across the imperial domains as a homeless minstrel singing songs about philosophy and government. While Lan would accept small payments for songs this money would only be spent on food and drink, never anything to enrich themselves beyond that.

Lan is depicted as a beautiful though androgynous youth of around eighteen. Lan is known to take both male and female lovers. Lan is known to enjoy copious amounts of alcohol, even among the other Immortals. Their symbol is a lute filled with flowers.

*"Lan Caihe for song and dance, for song and dance!
How short our sojourn here below!
The ancients have passed away like running water,
never to return;
While the men of to-day are pressing on in ever
increasing multitude."*

Lü Dongbin

Dongbin was born into a family of some success, enough that when his intelligence and love of writing began to show his parents sent him to become a scholar. It was during his times of study that he began to consider the Tao.

One night while he booked his millet Dongbin



dozed off, dreaming of his future. He saw himself pass the Imperial Exams and receive a high posting at the end of the year. He saw himself marry a woman from a noble family with who he would have a son and daughter. He saw himself become the Chief Minister of State, the most powerful man outside the imperial family. Then he saw what it took to get there, the enemies he made and jealousy fostered towards him. He saw his wife betray him, his children killed by bandits and finally himself, alone and beaten, dying in the streets. He saw above him a man, Zhongli Quan, who called for him to visit Chang An, where he could face ten tests to avoid his fate.

When he awoke his millet had cooked and he knew he had to make preparations to leave immediately.

In Chang An he faced Zhongli's ten challenges and after passing all of them he was gifted by Fuxi with the power of the second of the Immortals. His symbol is a scholar scroll with millets strewn around it.

Han Xiangzi

Patron of flutists and other woodwind musicians Han is considered one of the most jovial of the Immortals. Often visiting human cities and towns to take part in festivals and to have an audience to test his new songs.

He is known to have a romantic relationship with Longnu, The Dragon Girl, 7th daughter of the Dragon King, lord of the rivers and seas. The two met when Han visited the eastern sea and played his flute the first time as an immortal. Enchanted by the melody Longnu rose from the seas to dance and the two soon became lovers.

Not long after he was visited by an old woman who claimed to be Longnu's mother. The Dragon King had forayed their romance due to Han's connection with Fuxi and locked his daughter beneath the seas. Longnu had sent a gift with her mother, golden bamboo from the Dragon Kings garden. With this Han crafted a powerful magical flute that carries with him always as he still seeks to free his beloved from her father.

His symbol is the golden bamboo flute.

Zhang Guolao

In life Zhang was a renowned Fangshi, or Occult-Alchemist. He was a known practitioner of necromancy and claimed to be several hundred years old even before attaining immortality. He was often invited to the courts of mortal nobles and even Emperors but always refused. He once killed and revived a rival necromancer by the name of Ye Fashan who was highly favored by the imperial court after the man delivered him a scathing insult. It took the Emperor begging forgiveness to convince Zhang to resurrect Ye Fashan. He has a great love of wine and wine-making and is often revered by mortal winemakers and toasted at drunken parties. He also developed his own style of martial arts that is commonly practiced by highly difficult to master involving complicated movements such as backflip kicks and shoulder stands. His symbols are the white donkey and fish drum.



Zhongli Quan

First to be raised to the rank of Immortal Zhongli Quan has played a part in the ascension of four of three of his fellow immortals.

In life he was born into a powerful family in the court of the emperor. Following his father's path Zhongli became skilled in the arts of war and rose to the rank of general in the Imperial army. His tenure did not last long however, during his first campaign in Tibet he was beaten badly and forced to flee alone into the mountains. Freezing and starving he came upon a hermit who offered him food, shelter and spiritual guidance. He stayed many months and learned the secrets of alchemy along with crafting his fabled fan of life and death.

Once Zhongli had proven himself capable of wielding this power and wise enough to know when to the hermit revealed his true form as Fuxi, the Heavenly Sovereign. He anointed Zhongli as the first of his Immortals and instructed him to find others worthy of the same gift.

His symbol is the black fan which when waved can kill, resurrect, or turn stones into silver and gold.





Egyptian Pantheon



Anubis

As the god of death, mummification, and the afterlife, Anubis oversees the vital mechanisms whereby the bodies and spirits of the deceased are prepared for their transition to the next world. It was through the power of Anubis that Osiris was once again revived, and it is only through imitating this first embalming that mortals can hope to pass through the Gates of Duat whole and intact.

With the aid of other chthonic deities such as Osiris and Thoth, Anubis stands at the Scales of Truth in judgment of each soul that passes through the Gates of Duat. Those souls that are deemed worthy when their hearts are weighed against the sacred Feather of Ma'at are allowed entry into the realms beyond, though their trials are by no means over. Those souls whose evil deeds outweigh the Feather of Truth are condemned to oblivion, as Ammut, the Great Devourer consumes them.

Though rarely, Anubis has been known to show a form of mercy when the judgment of the Scales of Truth is uncertain, devising a fitting penance for the soul to undergo before weighing them a second time. Such was the case when the god Set—his own father—passed through the Gates of Duat.

As the only son of Set, Anubis was placed in a unique position when his father usurped the throne. Neglected by Set since birth, Anubis was not privy to his schemes, and was just as shocked as the rest of Egypt when Osiris was murdered. Osiris, his uncle, had been almost a surrogate father to the young god, and, though Set offered

Anubis the Underworld as his domain to rule, Anubis refused to ally himself with the traitor for the sake of any prize.

Seeking out the exiled Isis, Anubis offered his aid, and together, though it took many years, they succeeded in gathering and assembling the fragments of Osiris. Anubis, with the combined power of Isis' and his own magic, performed a series of rites upon the god's shattered body, forging his divine corpse into a vessel that could contain his lost spirit.

Set, hearing of this latest attempt to revive his fallen brother, took the form of a great leopard and attempted to interrupt the ritual by attacking his rebellious son. Anubis, however, was prepared, trapping his father within a barbed net that Set could only escape by slipping free of his own skin. It is in commemoration of this victory that the Sem Priests still wear the pelt of a leopard as a badge of their office.

Body and soul now reunited, Osiris rose again, and with Isis and Anubis at his side, defeated Set and the forces of Chaos. In victory, Osiris entrusted Anubis with a most vital task: he would guard the Gates of Duat and pass judgment on the souls of the dead, including his defeated father. Perhaps as pity, or perhaps simply for the sake of putting such a powerful warrior to use, Anubis elected to forestall the weighing of Set's heart. Until that day of judgment comes, Set will do battle with the Great Serpent Apophis each night, little by little working away the weight of his evil deeds.



Bastet

As goddess of fire, cats, and the setting sun, Bastet is at once a fierce warrior and a gentle caretaker. In times of peace, she protects hearth and home, fostering her mortal and feline charges while repelling the rodents, serpents, and other vermin that taint the sanctity of homes and sacred places. In times of war, she is first to dive into battle, demonstrating her ferocity as a daughter of Ra with unmatched skill with claw, blade, and flame.

Just as many of Ra's children, Bastet has a role to play in the nightly journey of the Atet, the solar barge. Before Khepri can enact his power and restore Ra to life, Ra remains vulnerable and insensate to the myriad dangers of Duat. In ages past, Ra was capable of undergoing the journey alone and facing off against the Chaos Serpent Apophis without incident, but the great god's powers have waned as time has gone on. Now, even with the power of Amun granting him the title of Amun-Ra, the ancient deity requires a great deal of aid in each cycle.

Bat

Bat was a goddess worshiped from the earliest days of the Egyptian histories. Primarily worshiped by shepherds and farmers, she was seen as a good of cattle and sheep. Her appearance was said to be similar to that of Hathor, a goddess of shared domains, whom, during the blood rage instilled by Ra, would devour the essence and power of the lesser Bat.



Ozymandias, King of Cats

During a brief interregnum in the eighteenth dynasty, a priestess of Bastet named Neferet sought guidance from the goddess of cats. The recently deceased Pharaoh had left only a young heir whose mother had died in childbirth, and the fight over the stewardship of Egypt threatened to plunge the New Kingdom into another age of war and darkness. Bastet, hearing Neferet's pleas, offered a solution: the former Pharaoh's closest and most trusted companion would receive her blessing, holding the throne until the heir came of age.

At Neferet's request, the court advisors gathered in the palace, each making their case before the altar of Bastet and patiently awaiting the goddesses' choice. To their collective shock, the Pharaoh's cat, Ozymandias, leapt onto the vacant throne as the voice of Bastet filled the hall. "Here sits Ozymandias, King of Cats, steward of the throne of Egypt. Treat him well, for if any should bring him to harm, they will suffer his fate nine-fold."





Hathor

Hathor, goddess of love, fate, fertility, and music is a complex, dual-natured deity most often depicted with the head or horns of a cow. As a daughter of Ra, she, like many of her brothers and sisters, holds court aboard the solar barge Atet during the day, and by night guides the celestial ship through the kingdoms of the underworld in the cycle of renewal.

A protector of pregnant women, Hathor oversees the births of all those whom call upon her, acting as a sort of spiritual midwife. It is said that Hathor knows the fates of all those mortals she helps birth, with some claiming that she can influence the destinies of newborn Pharaohs. In reality, Hathor has been known to swap newborns straight from their cribs, denying Pharaohs with particularly cruel fates the chance to rule.

A master of musical performance and dance, Hathor entertains gods and lucky mortals with joyful songs said to bring mirth to even the darkest halls. The sistrum, a musical rattle in the shape of an ankh, is said to have been first crafted by Hathor, and is commonly used in rituals dedicated to her worship.

In these roles as nurturer and protector, Hathor is rightly viewed as a benevolent guardian of life and humanity, but there is another, more violent side to her. In her role as the Eye of Ra, Hathor can be driven into a state of unyielding rage and bloodlust. This terrifying frenzy has thankfully only been utilized once to punish mortals who had turned away from Ra, but the sheer destruction of this event is said to have stained the Nile red with the blood of innocent and guilty alike.

Foreign Affairs

Though how they came to meet remains a mystery, it is known that Hathor and the Chinese goddess Sunü maintain a close friendship. Hathor is often seen playing an enchanted pipa gifted to her centuries ago by Sunü. The beautiful and largely unknown music she plays with it make it a favorite among the other gods of Egypt.

It is uncommon, but not unknown, for friendships like this to develop between deities of different pantheons and more commonly occurs when the pantheons in question share some distance between one another, making the threat of war less of a deterrent towards cordial relations.

With the growing power of Marduk and his pantheon some believe the friendship between Hathor and Sunü could be the start of a more concrete alliance between the Egyptian and Chinese pantheons.



Isis

Isis, goddess of magic, healing, womanhood, and the cosmos is one of the most widely worshiped deities in the known world, with her wisdom and power attracting followers throughout Egypt and beyond. A spellcaster of unrivaled skill, Isis wields her tremendous cosmic power with remarkable restraint, choosing to primarily employ these powers in a protective or healing capacity as opposed to a destructive or vengeful one.

Isis' protection extends to all of the lands of the Nile, but most especially to the women that call Egypt home, granting them special autonomy over their counterparts in neighboring realms.

Any man that attempts to control or dictate the dress or behavior of a woman, including his wife, should be wary of drawing the ire of Isis. Men choosing to ignore the protection of Isis may find themselves subject to anything from small misfortunes to sudden and inexplicable death, depending on the severity of the abuse.

Her consort, Osiris, dwells as Lord of the Underworld from his kingdom in the third realm of Duat. Though betrayed, murdered, and chopped to pieces by his brother Set, Osiris was successfully resurrected through Isis' magic after she managed to meticulously collect each of his severed body parts. Not quite living nor dead, Osiris is confined to the realms of Duat which he rules. Despite being separated by the veil of death, Isis' role aboard the Atet allows her to visit Osiris within the Underworld each night.



As one of Ra's protectors aboard the solar barge Atet, Isis aids in the ship's navigation through the kingdoms of Duat, and it is by her power that the great serpent of Chaos, Apophis, is sealed away each night. Towards the end of each cycle when Apophis rises to swallow Ra, Isis summons a massive serpent of her own— Mehen. Mehen, though not the equal of Apophis, is large enough to impede his attempts to sink the solar barge or strike at Ra directly, allowing Isis, Horus, and Set to focus on subduing the Chaos Serpent. Once restrained, a series of Isis' spells (granted yet further power by the nightly rituals of mortal priests in the overworld), chain Apophis for yet another day within the seventh realm of Duat. Though certainly powerful in her own right, it is the knowledge of Ra's secret name (a key component of his deific soul) that grants Isis her complete mastery of magic. Ra, being extremely protective of this powerful aspect of himself, was understandably reluctant to share it, so Isis devised a cunning scheme. Knowing that only a piece of Ra himself could harm the sun god, Isis carefully filled a cup with his saliva as he slept before fashioning a venomous serpent from the divine liquid.

When the serpent struck Ra, the wound festered and he grew weak. Summoning the other gods, each member of the pantheon attempted to heal him, but to no avail. Finally, Isis offered her assistance, but reasoned that the wound was too great for her power alone— only Ra's secret name could grant her the strength to restore him. Begrudgingly, Ra uttered his secret name to Isis alone, and with its power, she healed the wound her serpent had caused. Now undisputedly the most powerful magic practitioner of the pantheon, Isis uses her abilities to protect the very god she had deceived to claim them in the first place.

Khepri

Khepri, the scarab-headed god of life, rebirth, and the morning sun has been worshiped by the Egyptians since pre-dynastic times. As a solar deity, Khepri is sometimes seen as an aspect of the sun god Ra, but whereas Ra's power is strongest at its midday height, Khepri's power stems from the light of dawn as it emerges from the underworld.

Khepri has no clear lineage, nor has he sired offspring of his own. Instead, Khepri is said to have emerged fully formed from the oceans of Chaos at the beginning of creation. Eventually drawn through the darkness to the light of Ra, Khepri aided in the construction of the solar disc, as well as the celestial river that runs its course through the starry sky above and the underworld below.

Dwelling deep within the chthonic realm of Duat, Khepri awaits the solar barge Atet as it ferries the body of Ra on its nightly voyage through the underworld. Khepri has perhaps the most important role to play in this cycle, as it is his duty to revive the insensate Ra before the Atet reaches the Gate of Duat at mount Bakhu so that the cycle can begin anew. Without Khepri, the world would be plunged into an eternal night, granting Apophis— the colossal serpent of Chaos— free reign over the mortal realms.

As Khepri is a god of life and rebirth, protective amulets depicting Khepri in the form of a scarab are some of the most widely sought-after magical trinkets throughout Egypt and beyond. Their effectiveness depends greatly on the power of the priest that blessed them, with relatively inexpensive scarab charms said to ward off disease being common throughout Egypt. More powerful varieties, reserved only for the priesthood and the Pharaohs themselves are said to be capable of defying death itself.



Gates of the Underworld

The Gates of Duat are said to lie at opposite ends of the very edges of the world, each allowing passage in only one direction. Each gate is placed at the peak of a mountain and guarded by a pair of gigantic sphinxes known as the Akeru, with the eastern sphinx, Duau, guarding the peak of Mount Bakhu (where the Atet emerges from the underworld), and the western sphinx, Sef, guarding the entrance to the underworld at the peak of Mount Manu.

Osiris

As god of growth, resurrection, and the underworld, Osiris rules over the chthonic realm of Duat as well as the uncounted dead that call it home. Once fated to take his place as undisputed sovereign of both the living and the dead, Osiris' destiny was cut short by the schemes of his treacherous brother, Set.

Millennia ago, as Ra was forced to devote yet more of his power to keeping the Great Serpent Apophis at bay, it became clear that a new god must take on the responsibility of guiding and protecting the people of Egypt. Immaculate Osiris, with the wise queen Isis at his side, was the obvious choice. Though Ra was reluctant to cede power, Isis had already more than proven herself in the safekeeping of Ra's secret name, and Osiris, for his part, had never demanded she share that sacred secret nor the power it held.

Isis and Osiris proved to be effective and beloved rulers, with Egypt prospering greatly under their reign, but as the realm flourished, Set's jealousy only grew. Despite Isis' warnings, Osiris trusted his brother, and upon returning from a foreign land, fell right into Set's trap. What began as a party celebrating his return soon spiraled out of control, with Set and his mortal followers locking Osiris inside an ornate sarcophagus and hurling him into the Nile.



When Isis discovered what had happened, it was too late. Set had succeeded in tearing his brother limb from limb, ordering his followers to spread the dead god's pieces throughout Egypt. Isis was forced into hiding as she sought out each of these sacred limbs, all the while being hunted by the forces of Set. Shrines dedicated to the resting places of each of these holy pieces of Osiris still stand to this day.

Finally, though it had taken many years, Isis successfully united the pieces of her fallen husband, and with the aid of the God of the Dead, Anubis, enacted a ritual that had never before been successfully attempted. As Anubis held open the gates of Duat, she spoke the secret name of Ra and pulled Osiris' wayward spirit from the darkness of that realm. Osiris' body, having been properly prepared by Anubis, proved a ready vessel, and once again Osiris was restored.

Not quite living nor dead, Osiris' new form, though powerful, would last only a short time in the realm of mortals, so he made haste to the palace of Set, gathering a host of gods and loyal men and women of Egypt. Though Set summoned great storms and took many harrowing forms over the course of the battle, Osiris and his host proved victorious, with Set laid low and his spirit cast into the halls of Duat.

Osiris, entrusting the rule of the living to Isis, took up court over the dead within the Underworld. Here, he remains even now, awaiting the day that the gates of Duat are thrown open once again.

Ra

The Egyptian Pantheon is both complex and ancient, with many of its gods and goddesses having seen thousands of years of worship, warfare, and change. The often violent upheavals experienced by the people of Egypt are reflected in their sometimes fickle devotions towards deities that rely just as much on their veneration and worship as the people rely on them. None, perhaps, exemplifies this concept more than Ra.

The Sun God

Once the undisputed ruler of the Earth, the sky, and the Underworld, Ra presided over the Egyptian pantheon for millennia. However, much like the rising and setting sun, Ra's dominion over humanity and the gods alike has come and gone. Though a series of rulers, including Osiris, Set, and Horus, have succeeded him, he has never shirked his duties, even now assuring that the cycles of life, death, and renewal are never disrupted.

Atop his solar barge known as The Atet, Ra travels across the sky on his daily voyage before descending into the darkness of the Underworld. It is here, within the chthonic depths beneath the world that he must overcome a series of harrowing but necessary trials. Failure could mean the destruction of the world. Thankfully, he is not alone in his daily task. A dozen goddesses, including his daughters Hathor and Bastet rarely leave his side, each with a role to play in the cycle. Osiris, Horus, Isis, Khepri, and even Set, the god of chaos, lend their aid each night to ensure that Ra's ship always emerges intact.

Domains

Ra is one of the oldest existing gods, having been worshipped since time immemorial. For this reason, the list of domains associated with his power is extensive. Over millennia the creation of new gods (many with overlapping domains) has led to a division of worship. For example, as a sun god, Ra's association with the sky is indisputable, but he now shares that distinction with numerous others, including Amun, Nut, Horus, Thoth, and even his own children Hathor and Shu.

The Sun

First and foremost, Ra is a god of the sun. Much like Apollo of the Greco-Roman pantheon, he guides the sun across the sky each day, and thus is responsible for providing light and warmth to the world. His worshipers give prayers of thanks at each sunrise, and especially at midday, when the sun reaches its apex in the sky.

It is said that his power reaches its peak at high noon before beginning to wane as night draws closer, culminating in the sunset at which point Ra enters a deathlike state. As described above, and in more detail in the chapter concerning the Underworld, the solar barge continues beneath the Earth until Ra is finally revived by the scarab god Khepri so that the cycle can begin anew.

Order and Creation

Though the Egyptian stories describing the creation of the world are varied and often contradictory, there are a few commonalities that temple priests agree upon from Heliopolis to Thebes. In the beginning, there was nothing save an ocean of primordial chaos. From this chaos the earliest gods formed, bringing order to the tumultuous nothingness. Some priests claim Ra was chief among these early gods, and that it was his light that brought life to the lifeless Earth. This is where beliefs begin to differ and schisms such as the Amarna Heresy (which sought to use the sun disk of Aten to elevate the role of the Pharaoh above the gods) begin to form.

Set

God of chaos, storms, war, and the desert sands, Set is a complex figure that is more often placated than outright worshiped. Having once succeeded in usurping rulership over all of Egypt, Set proved to be a bloody and merciless warlord before being defeated by the very brother he had betrayed and slain.

Well into the rule of Isis and Osiris, Set began to covet the power of the throne, and so devised a scheme. First, Set sought to draw Osiris away from Egypt, unleashing a powerful storm upon the neighboring territories. Gathering mortal conspirators to his cause, he prepared a great party for his brother's return before constructing an ornate sarcophagus that would serve as the bait for his trap.

Upon Osiris' arrival, Set embraced his brother and made a show of welcoming him home before beginning the festivities in earnest. To all appearances, the party was intended to commemorate Osiris' return, but Set and his conspirators had a more sinister celebration in mind. Displaying the wondrous sarcophagus to all in attendance, Set announced that it would serve as a gift to the one whom it fit best. One by one, each of the guests climbed into the gold-inlaid box, but it was clear that none quite fit the coffin's confines.

Finally, Osiris himself, standing before the assembled crowd announced that he would make his attempt. Osiris climbed into the box with ease, the sarcophagus having been meticulously sized to his proportions. No sooner had he entered did Set leap forward, shutting the coffin's lid and urging his followers to aid him in chaining it shut before piercing the box with hot lances and hoisting it into the Nile.

As steam still rose from the place where the coffin sank, Set and his followers made their plans. Knowing that Isis would no doubt attempt to restore her husband, Set tore his brother's body asunder, entrusting each of the fragments of Osiris to his conspirators to scatter across the land.



Though Set and his followers diligently hunted Isis throughout Egypt, she was a master of illusion and disguise, and cunningly evaded every attempt at capture. Eventually, as rumors of the return of Osiris reached his ears, Set gathered his forces and prepared for a final confrontation with his vengeful brother.

Taking the forms of a series of colossal beasts, Set rampaged through his brother's forces, each new form more brutal than the last. Osiris' new form proved formidable as well, towering over mortal soldiers as he dealt a piercing blow to his treacherous brother. Refusing to retreat, Set summoned a storm which threatened to consume all of Egypt, but Osiris, empowered by Isis' magic struck true before it could be unleashed. Defeated, Set was hurled into Duat where he would stand trial and be judged for his crimes.

Wise Anubis, having aided in Set's fall, had prepared a fitting penance for his treacherous father, which Set continues to pay even now. Each night, as Apophis breaks free from his bonds and attempts to destroy

the solar barge, it falls to Set to defend the Atet from the Great Serpent of Chaos. Hurling himself into each of these nightly battles with reckless abandon, Set's very spirit is rent by Apophis' venomous fangs, leaving him in a state of near-perpetual agony. Only noble Isis is capable of restoring Set after each duel, leaving Set at the eternal mercy of the goddess he once sought to usurp and destroy.

Sobek

Though Sobek is closely associated with fertility and warfare his primary domain relates to the Apotropaic magics. That is, the magics intended to turn away harm and evil influences to the soul. It is thanks to this power that he has been named Warden of Set, tasked by Ra with ensuring Set is kept clear of the malign influences of Chaos as he defends the solar barge.



Thoth

Ibis-headed Thoth stands as one of the few gods to emerge alongside Ra, fully-formed from the primordial Chaos at the beginning of creation. A god of time, knowledge, wisdom, and magic, Thoth is credited with the invention of the first system of writing, which he immediately put to use in recording the histories of all things to come.

As scribe and historian of the gods, Thoth records the deeds of both the living and the dead, sitting as final judge over the fate of all souls as he oversees the ritual weighing of the heart alongside Anubis. Those whose deeds weigh too heavily on the Scales of Truth are denied entry to the afterlife, and their hearts are fed to Ammut, Great Devourer of the dead.

Understanding the plight of mortals better than most, Thoth has chosen to share the gifts of knowledge with those priests and scholars wise enough to beseech him, often granting glimpses of his sacred texts in dreams. Even the moon, with its cycle of phases, is said to have been a gift of Thoth to help mortals number their days, as well as to light the night sky while the sun is hidden beneath the earth.

The Book of the Dead

The original Book of the Dead is said to have been written by Thoth, with numerous incomplete variants and copies circulating throughout Egypt. These copies, most often transcribed by priests of Thoth, Anubis, or Osiris, are intended to prepare mortals for their inevitable transition to the afterlife, with hundreds of spells and funerary rituals as well as thorough descriptions of each of the kingdoms of Duat and the trials they will face before reaching the afterlife.





Zoroastrian Pantheon



Ahura Mazda

Ahura Mazda stands at the head of the Zoroastrian Pantheon — though it is a pantheon in name only. Ahura Mazda stands alone as the sole true deity worshiped by the Parthian Empire's Zoroastrian followers.

Though other divine beings, known as the Amesha Spenta, serve Ahura Mazda and receive their own worship and veneration, their power more closely resembles that of the Greek demi-gods. The most prominent of these being Asha Vahista, she who brings fire and luminaries. Asha is often seen at Ahura Mazda's side when battle is joined.

His followers believe that Ahura Mazda created the earth, the heavens, and all humankind alone and that all other deities across the world must trace their origin back to him. In this way they see him as the supreme deity, above even the heads of the other pantheons. They still recognize the divinity of other gods, however.

Though Ahura Mazda himself is aware this is not the case, he is more than happy to allow his followers to believe such. Though small in number compared to many other pantheons, the followers of Ahura Mazda lend him great strength, both through their devotion and concentration on a single true god.

Ahura Mazda is well-liked by the people of the Parthian Empire, even those who do not worship him, for he has proven himself to be a just upholder of order. The longstanding peace between him and the Sumerian Pantheon has also allowed his reputation to grow undisturbed.

Ahura Mazda has also in the past been associated with the independent deities Apam Napat, Mithra, and Varuna, but no true pantheon was ever formed, and these gods have since gone their separate ways. The four are still known to be on friendly terms, however.

Ahura Mazda spends his days preparing defenses against the inevitable attacks each night. For his dark counterpart, Ahriman, launches endless raids against the earth realm. His hordes of chaos creatures are forced back each night before they can fully manifest in the physical world. An endless struggle, this battle is often compared to that which Ra must face each night on the Solar Barge. At his side each night is Asha Vahista, his greatest servant.

For Ahura Mazda the nights are endless battle while the days are endless regret.

Angra Mainyu

Angra Mainyu stands in opposition to all that Ahura Mazda seeks to uphold. For untold centuries they have been in pitched battle against one another, though this was not always the case.

Angra Mainyu and her brother Spenta Mainyu were born the twin sons of Ahura Mazda, those he meant to eventually form a true pantheon with. Though twins, the children could not have been more different. Spenta was just, scholarly, and charismatic. Well-liked by the people, his veneration had begun to spread quickly.



Angra meanwhile was wroth, inattentive, and charmless — several violent outbursts had made the Persian people quite wary of her and few ever openly worshiped her.

When confronted by her father, Angra dismissed his concerns, stating that the mortals were beneath them and that the deaths she had caused would serve to remind them of their place. Deep divisions began to run between Angra and her family and they often found themselves on the verge of violence. It was during these times Angra began to hear faint whispers in the dark. Though she could not make out their words, she felt soothed by them, reassured that her actions were the right ones.

It was during another attack on a small human village that Spenta confronted Angra upon the earth. Angra accused Spenta of being weak and wasting himself helping those that should be serving him. Though Spenta had come only to talk his sister down, things quickly turned violent as Angra, urged by the growing whispers, lashed out at her brother. Though evenly matched at first, Spenta quickly gained the upper hand, with the people's belief and veneration giving him strength as they watched him fight to protect them.

As she was on the verge of defeat the whispers Angra heard became a true voice that, though distant, she could finally understand. It was asking her a question: "Do you wish the power to slay your brother and those he protects?"



Angra affirmed this without hesitation and immediately felt a change begin. The being that had been whispering to her began to flood into her, imbuing her with its powers, but, so too, its desires.

In a burst of darkness, Angra Mainyu was gone, replaced with Ahriman — a distorted mirror of her former self — roiling with the dark powers of Chaos.

Looking up to her brother she simply stated: “All must return to one, one must return to all.”

And with one burst of chaotic energy, she rent Spenta, body and spirit, in twain.

Sensing the death of his son, Ahura Mazda quickly appeared at the site of the battle and saw what had become of both his children. Spenta lay dead at the hands of a dark, evil, yet unmistakable figure, Angra Mainyu.

Realizing what his daughter had become, Ahura Mazda launched an immediate attack but found that the powers his daughter had received had made them perfectly matched. Their battle raged for weeks, causing great destruction throughout the lands. It was only with the intervention of Marduk that the fight finally came to an end, the two deities using their combined might to force Angra Mainyu back into the Pits of Chaos.

Though not dead, Angra Mainyu would be banished, unable to manifest herself as any more than an apparition upon the earth. The only way for her to return to the mortal plane is by mass human worship, something those few that still remember her are loathe to give.

Creating a dark palace for her in the Pits of Chaos, Angra Mainyu took on a new name — Ahriman — and vowed to see chaos’ will done and all beings, mortal and divine, returned to the roiling pits.

Using the powers given to her by Chaos, Ahriman would create for herself agents that could act for her on the mortal realm. The most prominent of these (and her consort) is Jahi, a being who specializes in laying afflictions upon women, especially those who are pregnant. Together, these two and their underlings strike out against Ahura Mazda and the Amesha Spenta in an unending war to disrupt the light of their

Order and replace it with the roiling darkness of Chaos.

They have also managed to infect many other deities, spreading the potential for a Chaos incursion across the world. In The Isles, The Morrigan works tirelessly to bring about the consumption of all by Chaos while in Greece and Rome Discordia spreads the calling under cover of her own reputation.

Amesha Spenta

The Amesha Spenta are a group of six divine beings who serve Ahura Mazda in his defense against Ahriman and Chaos. Named for his lost son, they strive to live up to the just and noble intent that name carries with it.

Asha Vahista, she who brings fire and luminaries.

Vohu Manah, she who watches the cattle and the flocks.

Xšaθra Vairya, he who mines and forges.

Spənta Ārmaiti, she who embodies the mountains and earth.

Haurvatāt, he who tends the rivers and the fish.

Amərətāt, she who is the forests and the fields.

Together these six help Ahura Mazda maintain a defense against Ahriman and her hordes. Though not viewed as true deities, either by their venerated or outsiders, they are recognized as divine beings in the same vein as mighty Heracles, and those who underestimate their powers will quickly regret it. They are also far easier to contact than true gods. Often found in the wilds or even visiting human cities, the Amesha Spenta spend most of their time on the earth.

Sumero-Babylonian Pantheon

Anu

Anu, primordial god of the sky, the cosmos, and divine authority is the supreme deity from whom the Anunnaki descend. Though largely acknowledged to be the most powerful of the Sumero-Babylonian pantheon, he is rarely worshiped directly and has little interest in earthly affairs. Having invested a significant portion of his power in his sons, Enki and Enlil, he now traverses the vault of the heavens, only descending to earth when the mood strikes him.

Water and Wind

From his union with the earth goddess Ki, his sons Enki of the water and Enlil of the wind were born. Gifting them a manifestation of his heavenly power—the anûtu—the two brothers would be given dominion over the earth and sea while Anu returned to the sky. Together, the three would form a powerful Divine Triad which would last until the son of Enki, Marduk, was granted the anûtu in his war with Tiamat.

Enki and Enlil were reluctant to bestow Anu's powerful gift on Marduk, but the threat Tiamat posed was great, and they were unable or unwilling to face her themselves. As they debated, Marduk took it upon himself to beseech Anu directly, ascending to the heavens upon his wind-borne chariot and requesting an audience with the sky god. Anu, meeting his grandson for the first time, was pleased to see Marduk, and, though he too refused to make an enemy of Tiamat, granted him a divine gift—a great net that would expand to encompass any foe.

The Anûtu

The exact form of the anûtu remains a closely guarded secret of the Anunnaki, with some scholars and priests debating whether it has a physical form at all. Some interpret the anûtu's heavenly power as merely the divine approval of Anu, while others point to Enki's decision to bestow the anûtu upon Marduk as evidence to the contrary.

If the anûtu is indeed a physical manifestation of Anu's power, the consequences could be dire if it were somehow stolen. Anu himself has been notoriously indifferent to the affairs of the lesser gods, refusing to directly intervene even as the earth was flooded by Abzu and ravaged by Tiamat, so it remains to be seen if the theft of the anûtu would be enough to stir him to action.

If, as some theorize, the anûtu functions as a sort of channel for mortal worship, then it would certainly explain why Anu has never sought to cultivate his own temples and priests. It may be the case that worshipers of Marduk are unwittingly empowering Anu with every prayer and offering, giving the sky god the freedom to explore the cosmos at his leisure.

When Marduk returned with Anu's net, the brothers of water and wind accepted it as proof of their father's will and granted him the anûtu, along with the promise that, should he succeed, the throne of the Anunnaki would be his. Thus, with Tiamat's defeat, Marduk was made head of the pantheon and remains the steward of the anûtu to this day.

Tablets of Destiny

Marduk would not forget the aid granted to him by Anu. When he came into possession of the Tablets of Destiny— which, according to legend, foretell the fates of all gods and men— Marduk refused to read them, instead choosing to give them to the sky god for safekeeping.

The tablets presumably remain with Anu somewhere within the heavens, though rumors of them falling to earth as a result of the sky god's indifference persist. The tablets, said to be indestructible, would surely survive such a fall, but it is unlikely that they would remain together as a full set. A god or mortal in possession of even one of these legendary tablets would be able to accurately predict or even change future events if they were capable of translating the shifting portents carved therein. Fully assembled, the tablets represent a powerful existential threat to the status quo.

Enki

God of water, wisdom, and creation, Enki, along with his brother Enlil, are the first of the Anunnaki— the elder gods of the Sumero-Babylonian pantheon. Once ruling the pantheon in their fathers' absence, the brothers shared the mantle of leadership before passing it to Marduk, Enki's son. Now, wise Enki dwells most often beneath the waves of his oceanic realm, advising his son in all aspects of warfare and statecraft.



Earth Mother, Sky Father

The union of Ki, goddess of the earth, and Anu, god of the sky, was a momentous occasion, with the merging of their divine bodies shaking the very foundations of creation. For nine days the two remained entwined, only becoming separated with the violent birth of Enlil. Enki emerged soon afterwards, and the two infant gods were embraced by Ki and brought to earth as the tumultuous shaking finally came to an end.

Anu and Ki would have more divine children together, but it was these first births that left the cosmos in much the state it is now, with a clear separation between earth and the heavens.

Lord of Water

When Enki and Enlil had grown, Anu judged them to be worthy of the anûtu— a portion of his divine power which granted them the right to rule. Together, they formed a powerful Divine Triad, with Anu commanding the sky, Enlil the earth, and Enki the world's oceans, lakes, and seas.

Together, the Triad would prove effective rulers, though as Anu became increasingly disinterested in earthly matters, the younger Igigi gods saw an opportunity to test the brothers' power, threatening to openly rebel against the Anunnaki. Enlil, seeking to end the Igigi's rebellion before it began, asked Enki to use his command over the oceans to flood the earth to force the younger gods to surrender. Enki, far more even-tempered than his brother, offered a compromise: the humans would fill the roles the Igigi no longer wished to serve, with the ever-looming threat of his floods to keep them in line.

Like the water he represents, Enki is extremely adaptive. When his elder brother grew weary of leadership and elected to travel the world, it was Enki who took on the lion's share of their joint rule, with the god of water overseeing the land in equal measure.

Now that Marduk has overcome Tiamat and earned the right to rule, Enki has just as quickly adapted to the role of advisor, providing his son with wise counsel in times of war and peace alike.

Enlil

Firstborn son of the supreme Anu as well as a member of the original Divine Triad, Enlil, god of the winds, once held dominion over the earth. Though Marduk now leads the pantheon in his stead, Enlil bears no ill will towards his nephew, more than content to travel the realms he once commanded as something other than a conqueror. Though rarely held in one place for long, Enlil never shies from a challenge, even facing Tiamat before her defeat at the hands of Marduk.

As Tiamat and her allies rampaged across the earth, many innocents fell victim to their ceaseless rage. Enlil, just as the rest of the Anunnaki, was at first reluctant to face Tiamat directly, but could not sit idly while so many suffered. Taking to the skies, Enlil observed the movements of the forces of chaos, swiftly warning those unfortunate enough to find themselves in the warpath and escorting them to safety. This worked for a time, but eventually Kingu, Tiamat's consort and general, utilized the Tablets of Destiny to predict where Enlil would next appear, laying a cunning ambush that nearly brought low the god of the wind.

As Enlil arrived at Kingu's predicted location, Tiamat, laying hidden beneath the earth, emerged with a cacophonous roar, leaving Enlil briefly stunned. Reeling, but still determined to rescue the innocents present, Enlil narrowly avoided the deadly, venomous fangs of his pursuer as he counter-attacked with a violent tornado. Gathering as many of the terrified onlookers as he could with a sudden gust of wind, Enlil quickly made his retreat, but not before receiving a massive blow to the back courtesy of Tiamat's tremendous tail, shattering the nearby mountain range as his battered form was cast through it.

Only stopping once he was certain the mortals he had saved were out of harm's way, Enlil was now certain of the course the Anunnaki had to take. Though wounded, the greatest injury has been to his pride, as he knew that even with the full power of the wind at his command, Tiamat was too great a foe for him to face alone. Thus, when it came time to decide, Enlil (along with his brother Enki) chose willingly to step down from his position in the divine triad, bestowing the



Anûtu upon Marduk so that he might succeed in ending the War of Chaos.

A firm believer in self-reliance, Enlil took care to not provide what he deemed to be too much aid or guidance to his children. Each of them in turn has developed in accordance with this hands-off parenting style. Nergal, given perhaps the most attention as Enlil's eldest heir, was told that he would one day rule the cosmos as head of the pantheon. When it became clear that his fiery temper and impulsive nature would not suit the throne, this sudden divergence in his destiny left him resentful and directionless, but by following in his father's footsteps and becoming a wanderer of the earth, Nergal soon grew to appreciate the freedom afforded him.

The twins Ishtar and Shamash, though enamored with Enlil's tales of battles past and victories won, each came to their own conclusion regarding the nature of justice. Shamash, though an admirer of Nergal's skill at arms, vowed to become a very different sort of god than his elder brother. Ishtar, judging Nergal to be cruel and Shamash to be naive, developed her own philosophy somewhere in between the two extremes, exacting her own brand of justice and becoming a cunning and brutally effective warrior in her own right.

Ereshkigal

Ereshkigal, goddess of death, darkness, and Queen of the Underworld rules the realm of Kur alongside her husband, Nergal. Ishtar's elder sister, Ereshkigal is a powerful deity few would face willingly. Though her duties confine her to the chthonic realm she rules, even the gods fear her reach, as legions of demons and the souls of the damned are hers to command.

Queen of the Underworld

From her subterranean palace of Ganzir, Ereshkigal has ruled the chthonic realm of Kur for millennia, first as sole monarch, and then alongside a series of subservient husband-kings. These consorts, often mortal, would rarely last long, leaving the position vacant more often than not. Now, for the first time in her long reign, Ereshkigal has met a god she can call her equal—Nergal.

Meeting as bitter enemies, Ereshkigal and Nergal's battle only served to foster a hidden flame of passion, and soon the two would join together in marriage. Ruling jointly, these deific lords of the underworld oversee the countless souls of the dead as they pass through the gates of Kur.

These souls, mere shades of their former selves, are beholden to Ereshkigal's commands. Though she has rarely exercised this particular aspect of her power, the countless dead would form a fearsome army if so ordered— a threat powerful enough to dissuade any who sought to oppose the might of the underworld.

Hosts of demons, including the Gallu and Udug, also answer to Ereshkigal and Nergal. The swift-winged Gallu in particular are dutiful servants, performing all manner of administrative tasks, as well as dragging wayward souls to the underworld.

Kur

Unlike other chthonic realms such as the Egyptian Duat, mortal souls that pass through the gates of Kur are given no final judgment. As each soul enters, its identity is impassively recorded and sent on to the caverns of the shadow world, where the dead wander endlessly. Subsisting primarily on dust and mud, these shades find relief in the offered libations of the living, distributed first to the intended by the hands of the Gallu demons with the excess finding its way to the hungry hordes.

In this way, the honored and remembered dead are kept fed and cognizant, while the maligned and forgotten are doomed to slowly fade as they roam in search of dust and scraps.





Ishtar

Ishtar, goddess of love, war, and the heavens, is a cunningly complicated deity worshiped primarily within the borders of the Parthian Empire, though shrines venerating her can be found throughout the Mediterranean and beyond. Equal parts fickle and fair, Ishtar famously condemned her husband to the underworld for his infidelity before enlisting her twin brother, the god Shamash, to help free him.

Ishtar and the Underworld

Having established her power in both the heavenly and earthly domains, Ishtar set her sights on Kur, the chthonic realm of the dead. Ereshkigal, as ruler of Kur, had long touted her superiority over her younger sister, and when word came that Ishtar intended to challenge her power, she issued an open invitation for the goddess of love and war to visit her within the underworld.

Ishtar, not one to back down from a challenge, arrived alone at the gates of Kur dressed in resplendent melam and carrying her objects of power. Each of the seven gates of Kur refused to open until one of her belongings was placed before it, with each slamming shut behind her as she went. Finally, stripped of her powerful artifacts, she arrived at the throne room of Ereshkigal, preparing a powerful spell as she approached her elder sister.

Much to her surprise, Ereshkigal did not attack her, instead congratulating Ishtar on making it past the gates of Kur. Even without her objects of power, Ishtar was a formidable foe, and even the ruler of the underworld seemed unwilling to face her. Stepping aside, Ereshkigal offered her the throne of Kur. Ishtar elated at her simple victory, sat upon the throne and was immediately paralyzed as her sister's magical trap was sprung.

News spread of Ishtar's disappearance, and soon Enki came to understand what had happened to her, choosing to send the god of light, Shamash, to rescue his twin. Arriving to find the gates mysteriously opened for him, Shamash descended into Ereshkigal's hall only to find Ishtar, frozen and corpse-like atop the throne of Kur.

Shamash produced a sudden burst of light, temporarily blinding Ereshkigal as he snatched Ishtar from her cursed seat. Pursued by a swarm of Gallu demons, Shamash retrieved each of his sister's items of power, awakening her as they arrived at her heavenly palace. The Gallu demons, whose numbers were unending, threatened to tear the palace to dust if Ishtar or a suitable replacement could not be found.

Ishtar, incensed and ready for war with the underworld, sought her husband, Tammuz, who she was certain would be mourning her absence. Finding him within her bedchamber with a bevy of mortal women, Ishtar was deaf to his desperate excuses. As the Gallu demons descended on the palace, she emerged with Tammuz in tow, throwing him to his fate as her replacement.

Ki

Primordial goddess of nature, fertility, and the earth, Ki, through her union with Anu, lord of the sky, birthed the elder gods— The Anunnaki. Ki is fond of the wild places of the world, and considers all plants and animals upon the earth her children. Ki has a complicated relationship with humanity, as, though they certainly number among the most clever of her children, their rapid expansion and subjugation of the natural world sometimes earns them her ire.

Children of the Earth

Ki has given life to many beings over the millennia, both mundane and divine. Though the firstborn brothers Enki and Enlil are the most prominent, all the Anunnaki (and by extension the Igigi) trace Ki as their progenitor. Vegetation is said to spring forth wherever she goes, with even the most barren deserts becoming lush oases at her mere presence.

Though she has love for all of her children, her grandson, Marduk, remains a particular favorite. Before he rose to the head of the pantheon, the young deity was considered a god of agriculture and storms, two aspects that Ki went to great lengths to foster. Now that he rules, Ki offers him sage advice whenever asked, and sometimes unbidden.

Occasionally presiding over the Assembly of the Gods, Ki is most often a fair and just judge, but when it comes to matters concerning the desecration of nature, her temper can sometimes flare. When angered, the very earth is said to shake as great fissures swallow the guilty and innocent alike. The few times this has happened in the past were thankfully short-lived, but were it not for the intervention of Ishtar the devastation could have been catastrophic.

Humbaba and the Great Cedar Forest

Of all plant life upon the earth, Ki is said to favor the immense trees of the Great Cedar Forest, which are said to grow to towering proportions and live so long as to rival even the gods. The cities of Mesopotamia, being devoid of such trees,

often sent parties of men to fell these immense cedars and return with plentiful bounties of wood.

Ki, angered by the disrespect these humans showed to such a sacred place, went before the Assembly of the Gods and demanded that something be done. Enlil, seeking to placate his furious mother, set a monstrous guardian known as Humbaba to protect the forest, and soon the flood of wood-cutting men slowed to a trickle as any who entered the forest was torn asunder.

For many years few dared enter the forest, as Humbaba was said to sense the presence of intruders anywhere within his domain and hunt them relentlessly. Gilgamesh, the demi-god king of Uruk, heard tales of the Great Cedar Forest and the monster that stalked its legendary trees. Gathering fifty men and his enemy-turned-friend Enkidu, Gilgamesh set out to slay Humbaba and claim the cedars for Uruk.

Humbaba was a fearsome foe, but proved no match for the cunning and powerful duo. While Gilgamesh distracted the giant by offering to introduce him to the unwed women of Uruk, (who were actually the wood cutters in disguise) Enkidu struck from behind, and together they managed to wrestle Humbaba to the ground and sever his massive head from his shoulders.

The wood-cutters, casting off their disguises, wasted no time in felling a great swathe of sacred cedars; an act which did not go unnoticed by the earth goddess. Ki's anger manifested itself in a tremendous quaking of the earth, her rage soon threatening to level the city of Uruk just as its people had leveled her trees.

Ishtar, as patron deity of Uruk, acted quickly to prevent the destruction of the city. Confronting Ki directly, she was able to calm her with the offer of a compromise: for every cedar the men of Uruk felled, two would be planted in their place. Though it pained her, Ki agreed to Ishtar's solution, and the city was spared.

Assembly of the Gods

A council of the most esteemed and powerful Anunnaki, these twelve or sometimes more gods oversee much of the day-to-day decision making in the pantheon's administration. Often resented by the younger Igigi gods who are considered unqualified to join the assembly, it is the duty of the assembled to protect the hierarchical status quo.

The assembly is most often presided over by Ishtar, though Ki, Enki, Enlil, and even Nergal have filled this role in the past. Debate and dissent are common, with decisions rarely being fully unanimous, and the presiding god often being called upon to break ties.

Though the Divine Triad, and now Marduk, is the final authority in all matters, the assembly is perfectly capable of passing judgment on gods and mortals alike, as they did when Tiamat's consort and general, Kingu, stood trial for his role in the War of Chaos. In that case, it was the assembly that demanded Kingu's death, and Marduk who carried out the sentence.





Marduk

Marduk, son of Enki and the fertility goddess Damkina, stands as the patron deity of the city (and former empire) of Babylon. Beginning as a local god of farming, Marduk rose to the head of the Mesopotamian pantheon by defeating Tiamat and ending the War of Chaos. For this reason, Marduk is primarily worshiped as a god of order and justice, but also retains command of his previous domains of healing, agriculture, and storms.

Igigi and Anunnaki

Before humans had yet stepped foot on the earth, the elder gods, known as the Anunnaki, ruled. Chief among them was Marduk's father, Enki, god of water and creation. When the Igigi— younger gods prone to acts of negligence and rebellion— angered the primeval sea Abzu, the world was nearly consumed in a cataclysmic tempest, and so these new gods beseeched Enki for aid. Enki, as lord of water, had great reverence for Abzu, and refused to intervene even as the world was flooded, instead leaving the arrogant Igigi to solve the problem they had created.

Though it took much of their power, the upstart gods managed to finally subdue Abzu before the world could be fully destroyed by the primeval sea, and the Igigi cast his great carcass into the depths of the underworld from whence there could be no escape. But there would be no celebration, for their short-lived victory was soon interrupted by the arrival of an even greater threat.

War of Chaos

Angered by the destruction and imprisonment of her former consort, Tiamat, embodiment of primordial chaos, rose to avenge Abzu with an army of her monstrous offspring.

The Igigi, still reeling from their battle with Abzu were no match for the forces of chaos and were quickly forced to surrender or retreat as the flooded earth was upended once again. With many joining the forces of chaos, the remaining gods approached Enki once more and begged for assistance in their war against Tiamat, but still Enki refused to intervene.

All seemed lost until Marduk approached his father with a bold request. For but a portion of Enki's power, Marduk vowed to do what his father would not. Enki loved his son, and despite his misgivings, agreed.

Marduk, aflame with the power of Enki's storms and spells, mounted a chariot pulled by the four winds and while a host of gods faced the scions of chaos, challenged Tiamat to single combat. Even with Enki's power, Marduk faced a nigh-invincible foe. The force of her tail shook the earth and her bite delivered a deadly venom, but Marduk had come prepared with herbs and spells to neutralize this threat, and in her moment of surprise at his survival, he cast a great net crafted by the sky god Anu upon her massive form. Immobilized, Tiamat attempted to swallow Marduk, but with her jaws held open by the four winds, Marduk cast a great arrow down her throat and into her heart.

Aftermath

Marduk wasted no time in splitting Tiamat's body into pieces, commanding the four winds to scatter them in the hope that they might never be reunited. Kingu, Tiamat's consort and chief general of the armies of chaos was brought before Marduk as the gods rejoiced. Ever contemptuous, Kingu vowed that Tiamat would one day return to wreak vengeance upon the gods. Stripped of the Tablets of Destiny and tried before a council of Igigi and Anunnaki, Kingu was sentenced to death—an execution meted out by Marduk himself.

Though the tablets in Kingu's possession were indeed powerful, Marduk did not choose to hoard them for himself, instead granting them to

Anu in thanks for the great net that had proven instrumental in Tiamat's defeat. Anu, in turn, raised up a great temple upon the very ground which had been Kingu's final resting place. This temple, called Esagila by the Babylonians, is said to have served as Marduk's coronation chamber upon his ascension to ruler of the Anunnaki and Igigi gods, and served much the same purpose for the Babylonian kings that came after.

Babylon

It was around the towering ziggurat of Esagila that the first human settlements that would eventually become the great city of Babylon formed. Once the undisputed largest city in the world, Babylon was the center of an empire stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to the Gulf of Persia.

Babylon may no longer be the empire it once was, but the great city yet stands as a jewel in the crown of the Parthian Empire. For centuries, pilgrims from far-flung corners of the world came to witness the colossal golden statue of Marduk as it was paraded through the Ishtar gate to herald the new year. The kings of Babylon would cast off their crowns and lordly raiment, prostrating themselves before this golden avatar of their god to renew their vows of order and justice. In so doing, the blessing of Marduk would protect the city for another year, and the myriad woes so common to such vast metropolises would melt away like snow upon the hot sand.

This massive idol, more precious than any of the treasures within the city's vaults, has been plundered by invading forces four times over the course of the last millennia, with the Hittites, the Assyrians, the Elamites, and finally the Persians claiming it as spoils of war.

God of the People

Marduk, unlike many of his deific contemporaries, does not dwell in some distant Olympus only deigning to descend from paradise when the mood strikes, but instead prefers to live among his people. Donning a mortal disguise and carrying only a farmer's spade, Marduk travels far and wide in search of worthy allies in his fight against the children of Tiamat.

Though ostensibly slain, Tiamat's influence continues to pervade the mortal world, and her monstrous offspring are no less dangerous with her in pieces. These scions of chaos can be found primarily in the deep wildernesses of the world, but the more cunning among them are capable of taking on a human form, making themselves at home even within the walls of Babylon.

Those chosen by Marduk are often given a test, usually unwittingly encountering him as a veteran adventurer or an aged wanderer with cloak pulled tight around his wizened frame. The test might vary in scale or scope, ranging from defeating a dangerous foe to feeding a stranger in need, but all are designed to test the worthiness of a potential ally in the eternal struggle against chaos. Those chosen by Marduk or his followers are granted his blessing, and many become paladins with oaths in his service.

Nergal

God of fire, pestilence, and death, Nergal is a fierce deity with a reputation for bloodshed and destruction. Favored by warlords and conquerors, worshipers of Nergal usually fall into two categories: those looking to stave off plague and destruction, and those looking to spread it. Though he finds himself at home on any battlefield, his primary abode is the chthonic realm of Kur, from which he rules alongside his wife, Ereshkigal, Queen of the Underworld.

War of Chaos

As the son of Enlil, Nergal was groomed for leadership from a young age, but his impatience and often violent temper made it clear that Enki's son, Marduk, would be better suited for the role.

Though bearing some resentment for his cousin, Nergal was content for many years to wander the earth, unconstrained by the burdens of responsibility.

When the War of Chaos began, Nergal discovered his calling. While his father and uncle remained neutral, many of the Igigi gods were forced to choose sides, with a sizable number

allying themselves with the forces of Tiamat. Remaining loyal to the Anunnaki, Nergal sought to punish these traitors, joining the fight with a host of Igigi and Udu-g demons under his command.

Many traitor gods met their ends at the hands of Nergal's host, with great clouds of fire and pestilence marking their passage. Once Tiamat had been slain, it was Nergal who brought her greatest general, Kingu, before the assembly of the gods, and it was his voice that spoke loudest in condemning him to death.

Descent into the Underworld

At the feast honoring Marduk for the defeat of Tiamat, Namtar, envoy of Ereshkigal, was sent in her stead. Nergal, refusing to show the proper respect to such an esteemed envoy, demanded to know why the Queen of the Underworld did not attend herself. Namtar, offended, explained that Ereshkigal's duties prevented her from leaving the realm of Kur, and declared that she would soon know of Nergal's impetuous slight.

Marduk, not wishing to risk a conflict with the underworld so soon after the War of Chaos, told Nergal to follow after Namtar and apologize to Ereshkigal directly. Nergal was furious, both at Marduk for suggesting he apologize and at Ereshkigal for her part in putting him in this situation, but, relenting to the new ruler's demand, gathered fourteen of his demons and marched to the gates of Kur.

Upon arriving at the first gate, Neti, Gatekeeper of the Underworld, explained that each of the seven gates would require Nergal to leave one of his possessions behind. Nergal, having heard the tale of Ishtar's descent, knew that the gates would shut behind him, and, though he discarded an article of clothing at each gate, also left a pair of demons as he passed. Having commanded each pair of demons to hold open their respective gates, Nergal was prepared for any potential trickery on the behalf of Ereshkigal.

Finally standing naked and demonless before the Queen of the Underworld, Nergal found himself accosted by Namtar and mocked by

Ereshkigal. All thought of apology evaporated. Effortlessly knocking the envoy aside, Nergal charged Ereshkigal with the intent to strangle her, but soon found himself in a violent struggle with the goddess of death.

Their chaotic wrestling match continued for hours as the two deities traded barbs and insults and the throne room crumbled around them, with neither seeming to claim the upper hand for long. Soon, however, what had begun as a fight to the death soon became something far more intimate as they consummated their mutual attraction.

Nergal, never having met a woman that could truly challenge him in the way Ereshkigal had, asked for her hand in marriage, to which she accepted. Namtar, though horrified by the culmination of these events, quickly set to work rebuilding the destroyed throne room—this time with two stone seats to signify their joint rule of Kur.

The Udug

Powerful demons of shadow, the hulking Udug absorb all light they touch, leaving an empty darkness in their wake. Few have seen their true forms, though they are exceedingly tall and their vicious claws drip with venom.

Dwelling primarily in the underworld, the Udug relish any opportunity to feed on the light of the surface, though they can only absorb so much before becoming lethargic and retreating to the cold darkness of their home.

Despite their appearance, most Udug aren't naturally aggressive, and will respond favorably to those that do not attack or flee at the sight of them. Deviants do exist among them, however; most notably the Udug Hul. These shadow predators are thankfully rare, but exceedingly dangerous. Capable of melding with the shadow of an unsuspecting victim, the Udug Hul can stalk prospective prey for hours before striking at the perfect moment and disappearing into the night.





Shamash

The son of Enlil and the twin brother of Ishtar, Shamash is the god of light, justice, and truth. Shamash commands his solar chariot as he rides forth from the heavens each day, aiding Marduk in his never-ending crusade against the forces of chaos. Never one to turn down someone in need, Shamash heeds the pleas of desperate mortals, dispensing swift justice before returning to the skies.

Despite his relentless commitment to justice, Shamash is also a god of mercy. When Tiamat was slain, many of her monstrous followers stood trial before the Assembly of the Gods. It was Shamash who made the case for sparing those gods and mortals alike that had surrendered willingly. Even the Aqrabuemelu Scorpion-Men, who had been ferociously cruel in their battles with the Igigi and Anunnaki, now serve willingly in Shamash's personal retinue, escorting the god of light as he patrols the earth each day.

Though they often find themselves arguing opposite points of view in the Assembly of the Gods, Shamash and his elder brother, Nergal, have fought together countless times on a thousand battlefields. Nergal may not have the same commitment to justice as his younger brother, but his unquestionable mastery of the art of war has helped forge a mutual (if sometimes begrudging) respect between the warrior siblings.

As Ishtar's twin, it often falls to Shamash to steer her sometimes cruel impulses, tempering her rage towards what he would deem to be more positive outcomes. Both gods of justice, the twins represent two halves of the same coin, with Shamash embodying the more merciful aspect of justice and Ishtar the more vindictive. When Ishtar condemned her husband to eternal torment in the underworld, it was Shamash who convinced her to relent before aiding in freeing the hapless Tammuz from Erishkigal's clutches.

Uttu

An elusive, often misunderstood deity, Uttu is the goddess of weaving, oaths, and spiders. A daughter of the earth goddess, Ki, Uttu is responsible for the invention of clothing, first worn by the gods and now by humans as well. A recluse by nature, she prefers to watch the affairs of gods and mortals at a safe distance, though occasionally she has been known to tug their strings from her shadowy web.

The Great Weaver

When gods and humans first walked the earth, they did so naked. It was Uttu, with her great skill at weaving that first shared this gift with the world. For the gods, she crafted marvelous silk garments known as melam, said to grant those who wore them a great and terrible splendor. For humans, she taught the secrets of her craft, demonstrating how sheep's wool could be transformed into a simulacrum of her own silk. In part due to her monstrous appearance, Uttu has retreated from the light of civilization, weaving extensive silken lairs in the hidden places of the world. Not wishing to completely abandon those she left behind, Uttu has cultivated a veritable army of spies in the form of the spiders she commands. This web of unseen informants shares every meaningful detail with the spider goddess, giving her thousands of eyes across the world.

Keeper of Oaths

As goddess of bonds and promises, Uttu abhors oath-breakers above all else. With her web of eyes, she monitors every contract, binding agreement, and marriage betrothal, keeping careful record of each promise kept and broken. Minor offenders often find themselves experiencing strange misfortunes, while particularly egregious offenders may merit a visit from the spider goddess herself.

Melam

Used to describe both the wondrous silk of Uttu and the clothing itself, melam is highly sought after throughout the known world. Melam fabric is said to be so light as to float on the air, yet stronger than the sturdiest bronze. Those lucky enough to have worn it claim that it feels no different from wearing nothing at all.

Though melam began as the gossamer garments of the gods, it has since been seen (though rarely) in mortal hands. Demons and other monsters have been known to hoard melam for their own purposes, and the kings of Uruk once draped themselves in melam cloaks.

Uttu, being notoriously reclusive, is rarely called upon to spin new articles of melam, but if sought out, could potentially be persuaded to weave for someone willing to make a bargain.



CHAPTER 3

CHARACTER FEATURES



FANTASY RACES

During character creation, players are presented with the step to select their character's race. Characters in Age of Antiquity are predominantly human; however, this does not mean they should be statistically limited to the human racial traits. Here are a few options your GM may choose to introduce to integrate fantasy races into your game.

Mythological Beings

Throughout the history of fantasy media, the origin of these races can often be linked back to historical tales. By integrating mythological creatures as playable races, you will add a layer of the fantastical to your stories. Players and GMs should work together and consider these options carefully in regards to the tone of the campaign they are playing. An entire party of otherworldly monsters may not mesh well with a civilized game of political intrigue. Players should be encouraged to write creative backstories for their characters and how they may have strayed from the obscurity of myth into everyday life.

Diverse Humanity

With this approach, players will celebrate the vast range of characteristics and abilities that humanity is capable of. Instead of having players choose from a list of races, all players will be fundamentally human and choose a template of statistics from any existing playable race. While using this approach, players should be encouraged to examine each racial trait and creatively express how they came to possess these abilities. This is a world of gods, monsters, and myth. The seemingly ordinary inhabitants of this world are exposed to all manner of magic which may change the fabric of their being. This may include manipulation by monstrous entities or even divine parentage.

High Fantasy Earth

This method injects fantastical races directly into the history of the world. By using this approach, elves, dwarves, orcs, and an endless list of wondrous beings have always inhabited this world alongside humanity. How this changes the course of history is up to you.

Backgrounds

Antiquarian

Though Rome has grown to great heights in the eight centuries since its founding, there are many empires and cultures that came before it. You have dedicated your life to uncovering the secrets of these ancient civilizations as a member of the Antiquarian Order, Rome's foremost experts in history and archeology.

You have been educated to recognize the art and artifacts from such grand and ancient cultures as Babylon, Egypt, China, the Indus Empires, and numerous others.

Such is the renown of the Antiquarian Order that its members are regularly sought after to accompany teams of adventurers on expeditions into ancient ruins and forgotten tombs.

Though the danger is often great, members of the Order readily volunteer for the chance to discover a yet-unknown relic from a lost civilization.

Skill Proficiencies: History, Investigation

Tool Proficiencies: One set of artisans' tools of your choice.

Languages: One of your choice.

Equipment: A set of common clothing, an artifact of your choice worth 10 gold coins, a bag containing 15 gold coins.

Feature: No Secrets

When attempting to determine the origin of a relic or ruin you always know which culture created it, provided they belong to the Old World.

Feature: It belongs in (my) Museum

Such is your penchant for collecting antiques and oddities that it often borders on kleptomania. You gain advantage on any sleight of hand attempts to steal antiques and relics.

d6 Personality Trait

1. I know that I studied at the world's greatest academies and think little of those who learned elsewhere.
2. I am eager to spread my knowledge and will happily share with those who wish to learn.
3. I am a curmudgeon and lash out at those who irritate me.
4. I don't actually care for antiques, but it's a great way to make money.
5. I am quite stingy with my knowledge and share it only with those I deem worthy.
6. I prefer the company of my antiques to that of people.

d6 Ideal

1. Power: Some say knowledge is power; Knowledge lets me know that power is power. I seek to concentrate as much in my hands as I can.
2. Wealth: I have lived at the bottom for too long, I will have what I am owed.
3. Knowledge: Only through knowledge can we unravel the mysteries of the past.
4. Order: It's easier to get work done when things are well ordered.
5. Fame: I wish to become renowned for my discoveries.
6. Victory: History helps us see where we went wrong, and how to correct these mistakes in the battles to come.

d6 Bond

1. My signet ring, a gift from the teacher who instructed me and one of their first finds.
2. I am restless in cities and towns; I feel connected to being in the field.
3. Knowledge is the only company I need.

4. My tools, without them I couldn't work.
5. A fellow antiquarian with whom I share a close connection.
6. The first artifact I ever found, it started me down this journey.

d6 Flaw

1. I am incredibly jealous of those with more knowledge than me.
2. I'm lazy, an honest day's work is a great punishment to me.
3. I am a coward, what good is loot if you're dead?
4. I am incredibly greedy, I will attempt to take all the best spoils, even if it means lying to my comrades.
5. My drive for antiques causes me to disregard the danger of my choices.
6. I refuse to admit being wrong, even when I know the other party is right.

Auxiliary

You served in the Roman Army in the Auxiliary corps. Unlike the well-trained and equipped citizens that make up the Imperial Legions, the auxiliary is a motley group consisting of non-citizens living within the Imperial Provinces. To the citizen soldiers of the legions, the Auxiliary are seen as little more than expendable barbarians. Though ostensibly voluntary like the Legions, most Auxiliary soldiers feel they have little choice but to join. Towns and villages that provide large numbers of Auxiliary soldiers are granted more favor from Rome, and a soldier's commitment to the Auxiliary Corps directly impacts the lives of their friends and families.

Unlike the Legions, you were made to pay for your own arms and equipment. Many of your cohort were equipped with little more than sharpened sticks and tanned leather armor. Auxiliary who proved themselves and survived through multiple campaigns will often find themselves better equipped, having both scavenged arms and armor from their fallen enemies and having purchased better (often second-hand) equipment from the Legions.

After having served and survived for a decade in the Auxiliary you gained the ultimate prize however: Roman citizenship. You are now allowed to vote in senatorial elections and run for local magisterial offices.

Though still looked down upon by many of the Latin-born citizens of the Empire, you hold your head high, knowing you have earned your place in the empire through sweat and blood.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: Proficiency with knucklebones.

Languages: One of your choice.

Equipment: A set of auxiliary's clothing including a red tunic, sandals, and gloves. A set of knucklebones and cook's utensils. A bag containing 10 gold coins.



Feature: Between Worlds

You are a proud citizen of the Empire, having fought and spilled blood in its name to earn your place within. Your years in the corps have not washed away the culture you once belonged to, however, and your sacrifice in leaving your home and surviving to tell the tale has left you a folk-hero among your native people.

Choose one of the below cultures:

Gaulic, Breton, Iberian, Germanic, Illyrian.

You still have friends and contacts among the people of your birth and when traveling their lands, you can call upon this connection. People of your original culture may look favorably upon you and offer you shelter or food.

Conversely, some among your people view you as a traitor, and you may on occasion be targeted or harassed by them for having joined their conquerors.

d6 Personality Trait

1. I am haunted by the horrors of war.
2. I am loud and boisterous.
3. I feel bitter resentment towards the Empire for conquering my people.
4. I always follow the rules, even against my interests.
5. I take great pride in my physical prowess.
6. I look for insult where none was given.

d6 Ideal

1. Revenge: I seek to cruelly punish those who have wronged me
2. Duty: Though no longer serving, I still seek to uphold the Empire's stability.
3. Glory: I want to help expand the Roman borders to new heights.
4. Honor: I seek to find a worthy cause to fight for.
5. Protector: No matter where I am, I strive to help those in need.
6. Consumed by loss, I wander the lands a broken warrior, fighting, stealing and killing as I need.

d6 Bond

1. I have kept my service weapon in pristine condition, it remains an extension of myself.
2. My horse is my closest companion.
3. I remain in contact with other former soldiers from my cohort, they are like family to me.
4. A piece of wood carved into a symbol of my home.
5. My superior officer from my time in service, they offer sage advice.
6. My family, whom I miss dearly.

d6 Flaw

1. Even when in service, I worked poorly with others. I find it hard to make connections.
2. I am stubborn to a dangerous fault.
3. I lie even when there is no need to do so.
4. My belief in the Empire often causes me to get into fights when I hear others insulting it.
5. I am bad with directions and often get lost.
6. I am absent-minded and will sometimes forget to do regular tasks.

Chaos Cultist

The world was wrought in the throes of chaos and to Chaos it should be returned.

You were a member of a cult dedicated to the primordial forces of Chaos or to one of the deities seeking to return the world to that roiling void. Before your rituals were completed, however, a traitor in your midst sold your sect out to the local authorities and you were one of the few members to escape the purge and watched from the crowds as your fellows were returned to the void.

Though your sect was all but wiped out you still endeavor to see their work done. Though local sects of the cult seek to create minor tears in the veil through which the horrors and monstrosities of chaos might flow, the greater goal of the cult is to see the veil destroyed entirely, the physical and immaterial worlds reforged into one.

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, Arcana

Tool Proficiencies: Proficiency with forgery kits.

Languages: One of your choice.

Equipment: An obsidian ring bearing the emblem of your cult, a forgery kit, a set of traveler's clothes, and a bag containing 5 gold coins.

Restriction: Bound by Chaos

As an agent of Chaos your alignment faces restriction, you cannot be of Lawful alignment.

Feature: Follow the Signs

You are able to sense when a settlement has a chaos cult within it. If you sense a cult within a settlement, you can begin leaving signs that allow its members to recognize you as one of their own. Within 24-hours of leaving signs you will be contacted by a member of the local cult. They may provide you with information to help further the cause, or shelter should the authorities be after you.

d6 Personality Trait

1. I am fanatically loyal to my cult.
2. I wish to spread the word of Chaos to the masses.
3. I hate humanity and wish to see it punished.
4. The gods are false; in Chaos I know we will all be equal.
5. I seek to harness Chaos for my own power.
6. I have second thoughts about what I am doing.

d6 Ideal

1. Power: Chaos is the true power behind the universe and with it we can become gods ourselves.
2. Freedom: I seek to free humanity from the shackles of the gods who torment us.
3. Insanity: I am completely deranged and will lash out randomly.
4. Sacrifice: Anyone who must die to further the cause is a sacrifice to Chaos.
5. Revenge: This world has wronged me and I will see it undone.
6. War: I seek to create the chaos of war wherever I can.

d6 Bond

1. My fellow cultists.
2. My hatred towards the gods is the only bond I need.
3. The signet ring I use to identify myself with my cult.
4. My mentor who inducted me into the cult.
5. A tome of dark knowledge given to me by my mentor.
6. The roiling void.

d6 Flaw

1. I have trouble keeping my mouth shut.
2. I am dimwitted and need to have instructions repeated to me.
3. I am a social outcast and do not do well with other people.
4. I am noticeably ugly with an easy to remember face.
5. I hate working with teams.
6. I lack resolve.

Competitor

The Pan-Hellenic games, in which competitors from across the Greek-speaking world flock to Olympia to garner honor for themselves and their city, is among the most important events in the Mediterranean. To compete, and win, in these games has been your dream since childhood. You've always known it was your destiny. The other local children could never match you athletically. Be it racing, wrestling or throwing, it was always you who proved to be the greatest. The time of your childhood has passed now, and soon it will be your turn to travel to Olympia and prove to the wider Greek world that you are not simply the biggest fish in a small pond.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Acrobatics.

Tool Proficiencies: One musical instrument of your choice.

Languages: One of your choice.

Equipment: A set of athlete's clothing, one instrument of your choice, a medal or insignia of victory from a past competition and a bag containing 10 gold coins.

Feature: Showboater

You are the best — you know it and you're not afraid to let others know it too. You gain advantage on any intimidation rolls made to unnerve those you are competing against in games of athleticism and physical prowess.

d6 Personality Trait

1. I am the best there is and I will prove it.
2. I enjoy training new athletes looking to compete.
3. I always ask those who best me for advice on how to improve.
4. I am spiteful towards any who beat me in competition.
5. I am very jovial and enjoy celebrating with my fellows.
6. I spend all my free time training.

d6 Ideal

1. Glory: To be showered in fame and renown is all I desire.
2. Freedom: To be able to compete where I want, when I want, with no restrictions.
3. Wealth: I want to make my fortune and live a lavish life.
4. Promise: I made a promise to be the best there ever was.
5. Peace: Friendly competition is a far better use of time than war.
6. War: The strongest bodies make for the best soldiers.

d6 Bond

1. My trainer who entered me into competitions.
2. My family, who I hope to impress.
3. My fellow athletes who make it all worthwhile.
4. I feel a strong connection with the weak, remembering how I once was.
5. I have a lover back home whom I miss dearly.
6. The gymnasium where I train.

d6 Flaw

1. I am clumsy and often trip up at the worst times.
2. I am dedicated to physical training at the expense of all else, I can barely read.
3. I get nervous in front of large crowds.
4. I am willing to cheat to win.
5. I train even when my body is injured.
6. I wish pain on those who show me up.

Concubine

You served as a concubine to a great Lord or Lady. One member of a larger harem, you were trained in the arts of bodily pleasure.

When your lord died, their heir saw fit to exile many within the harem, and you were among those cast out from the great palace you had always called home.

An outcast, you have fought to make your own way in the wider world.

Skill Proficiencies: Persuasion, Acrobatics.

Tool Proficiencies: Disguise Kit.

Languages: One of your choice.

Equipment: A set of fine clothing, a disguise kit, and a bag containing 15 gold coins.

Feature: Honeyed Words

Your words are like honeyed milk to the ears of those to whom you whisper. You gain advantage on any persuasion or deception roll made to seduce your target.

Feature: World's Oldest Profession

Any settlement large enough to house a brothel is an opportunity for you as you may find gainful employment at any of these establishments. Provided you work, you will receive free lodging and food and earn 15 GP per day.

d6 Personality Trait

1. I'm very shy.
2. I am incredibly outgoing in my personal and professional lives.
3. I want for a life of comfort and plenty.
4. I know I'm beautiful and will use it to get what I want.
5. I am embarrassed to tell others of my past.
6. I am proud of my profession, no matter how others see me.

d6 Ideal

1. Wealth: Enough coin to never work again.
2. Freedom: The people should be free to make their own choices without the lords and kings of the world.
3. Privileges: The upper classes have powers and privilege that I covet.
4. Comfort: To live comfortably and safely is the most one can ask.
5. Peace: War is bad for business.
6. Lust: It's nothing to be ashamed of.

d6 Bond

1. I have a certain patron whose embrace I miss dearly.
2. The first brothel I worked; it has always felt like home to me.
3. Coin is the only company I need.
4. The world is a dark place, I don't feel strong connections with anyone.
5. A fellow concubine I met in my youth; we have always been there to support one another.
6. In a world like this, I can only rely on myself.

d6 Flaw

1. I'm actually a bit of a prude.
2. I complain if I have to walk long distances.
3. I talk too much.
4. I like to steal from my clients.
5. Seeing someone prettier than me drives me into a rage.
6. I always want to be the center of attention.

Dune Runner

You are a Dune Runner, one of the desert folk who spend their lives away from the comforts of the walled cities and their fresh springs. Your life has been a harsh one and many of those with whom you were raised did not make it to adulthood, their bodies lost and forgotten beneath the sea of sands.

Your people have no known settlements and live their lives nomadically, in small groups or entirely alone as the brutal conditions of the sands do not permit large or long-term groups.

Though much of your life is spent foraging the harsh dunes to survive, you and your people manage to make a little coin, and barter for needed items by acting as guides for travelers seeking to cross the brutal Parthian wastes. Such is the demand of these services that House Suren keeps several dozen of your people on retainer to ensure the continued flow of trade across the central Parthian Empire.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: One type of musical instrument of your choice.

Languages: One of your choice.

Equipment: A set of common clothes including a hood, four waterskins, one musical instrument of your choice, and a bag containing 10 gold coins.

Feature: Desert's Chosen

Your years running the dunes have made traversing the desert second nature to you. You cannot become lost when traveling the dune seas except by magical means. When foraging in the desert you are able to find twice as much food as your normally would. You can also travel twice as long as you normally could through extreme heat before making an exhaustion check.

d6 Personality Trait

1. I am loud and jovial to the point of annoyance.
2. I am happy to escort those who would otherwise never survive the desert.
3. I am a social person and don't like traveling the desert alone.

4. I am a loner and prefer my own company.
5. I actually hate the sand!
6. I want to see every desert in the world.

d6 Ideal

1. Exploration: There is so much to uncover, buried beneath the sands.
2. Freedom: Though harsh, the dunes offer a place where no lord will seek you out.
3. Unity: The desert is no place to be alone.
4. Hard work: The desert is harsh, only those who work for it will survive.
5. Peace: The dunes have long since drunk their fill of blood.
6. War: The dunes make the perfect environment for hit and run tactics against the unknowing.

d6 Bond

1. The desert, I could not live without it.
2. The breeze, which carries you through the dunes.
3. My family, who I stalked the desert with.
4. My favorite horse (or camel) with whom I share a strong connection.
5. There is a special person who I hope to see again.
6. Myself, it's safer alone.

d6 Flaw

1. I have a bad sense of direction.
2. I am not sociable and wish to be left to my own devices.
3. I am a coward; the desert makes a good hiding place.
4. I am greedy and will readily leave someone behind if they cannot pay.
5. I hate the heat.
6. I distrust those from outside the dunes.

Grovetender

You served as one of the Celtic grove tenders. Apprentices to the great druids, you were responsible for maintaining and protecting the divine groves deep within the forests of Gaul. Since the conquests, the Romans have sought to root out the remaining groves and see them burned and salted to ensure the druids never return.

You were a protector of one of these final groves, yet despite the best efforts of you and your fellow tenders, the Legionary Battle Mages saw to it that your grove met the same fate as so many before it. As one of the last living Grovetenders you hold within you the future of the ancient druidic circles and represent a last chance for their restoration. Your past must be kept secret when in Roman territory, lest the Battle Mages seek you out to finish their purge.



Skill Proficiencies: Nature, Animal Handling

Languages: Two of your choice.

Equipment: A set of earth tone common clothing, a walking stick with an elaborate druidic carving, one day's rations, and a bag containing 5 gold coins.

Feature: Child of the Forest

You have an unnatural ability to traverse the forests of the world. While within a forest you gain the following benefits:

You cannot become lost except by magical means. When foraging for food you are able to forage twice as much as you normally could. Anyone trying to track you gains disadvantage on their rolls.

d6 Personality Trait

1. I seek the company of like-minded folk.
2. I am eager to spread my knowledge and will happily share with those who wish to learn.
3. I get nervous when I am not in the safety of the forest.
4. I am dour and mournful.
5. I am quite stingy with my knowledge and share it only with those I deem worthy.
6. I prefer the company of trees to people.

d6 Ideal

1. Protection: Nature is no longer able to defend itself and we must step in to keep it safe.
2. Growth: For too long the trees have been felled and silenced, it is time for an age of growth.
3. Unity: The lone tree has no grove its own.
4. Sacrifice: Sometimes the trees must be watered with the blood of those who would fell them.
5. Peace: The engines of war require great amounts of wood to flourish.
6. Safety: To be secure in our own groves.

d6 Bond

1. The forest itself.
2. My mentor who inducted me into the ways of grove tending.
3. A particular forest spirit with whom I am close.
4. My family that I rarely get to see.
5. My duty to the forest.
6. A particularly large tree that I have watched over for many years.

d6 Flaw

1. I am hot-headed and quick to anger.
2. I am lazy and slow to rouse.
3. I am a coward and keep to the safety of the trees.
4. I am resentful to the towns and cities for the toll they take on nature.
5. I often misunderstand social situations.
6. I am slow to trust outsiders.

Of Gods and Oak

While many of the Celtic druids hold great resentment towards the deities of foreign Pantheons, most especially the Greco-Romans, there are others whose beliefs transcend the pantheons. The druid Perth is one such Grovetender. He holds a special connection with the great oak trees of the world, and though a Celt first and foremost, is more than happy to treat with any deities that align themselves to the oak.



Grovetender
Perth

House Retainer

You served as a personal retainer to one of the seven Great Houses of the Parthian Empire. These houses are second only to the Imperial Dynasty in prominence and each hold great influence within the empire. Each of the Great Houses has certain specialties and areas in which they are dominant within the Empire.

House Mihran specializes in the breeding and training of war camels and provides the largest number of riders to the Empire's defense and war efforts.

House Zik has substantial influence within the halls of the great Fire Priests and holds particular prominence among the Empire's Zoroastrian citizens.

House Varaz dabbles in the dark and wicked powers of the earth, skeletal thralls and other undead horrors guard their shadowed halls.

House Spandiyadh specializes in the assassination of the Empire's enemies, without and within. As such the other houses work hard to ensure they maintain good relations with the Spandiyadh. They have particular animosity towards the Varaz, as they view the necromantic arts as antithetical to their death-dealing.

House Ispahbudhan is considered the most martial of the houses (though the Mihran dispute this) and can put as many footmen into the field as the rest of the houses combined.

House Karen works closely with the ruling dynasty and has heavy influence in the day-to-day civil administration of the empire.

House Suren has the most direct contact with the other realms of the world. Their merchants can be found from Gaul to Wei and are a key piece of the global trade network that has materialized in recent centuries. Anywhere a merchant guild exists you can be sure at least one representative of the Suren will be present. They are currently led by Lord Jericho Chirag.

Skill Proficiencies: Perception

Tool Proficiencies: One set of artisan's tools of your choice.

Languages: One of your choice.

Equipment: A set of fine clothing in your house colors, a signet ring with your house emblem, one set of artisan's tools of your choice, and a pouch containing 15 gold coins

Feature: House Resources

When you choose this background select one of the houses below. You gain proficiency in the skill specific to this house. In addition, you may call upon this house in times of need. Provided they are able, the agents of this house will provide you shelter and information.

Conversely, the opposed houses will actively seek to frustrate any endeavors you may be undertaking, occasionally going so far as attempting to have you killed should you be perceived as a threat or inconvenience.

The House of Ispahbudhan — Athletics

Specialty: Soldiers.

Opposed Houses: Zik, Suren, and Varaz

The House of Varaz — Arcana

Specialty: Necromancy.

Opposed Houses: Karen, Spandiyadh, Suren, Mihran, and Ispahbudhan

The House of Karen — Insight

Specialty: Administrators.

Opposed Houses: Suren and Varaz

The House of Mihran — Animal Handling

Specialty: Cavalry.

Opposed Houses: Zik and Varaz

The House of Spandiyadh — Stealth

Specialty: Assassins.

Opposed Houses: Varaz

The House of Zik — Religion

Specialty: Priesthood.

Opposed Houses: Ispahbudhan and Mihran

The House of Suren — Persuasion

Specialty: Mercantilism.

Opposed Houses: Ispahbudhan, Karen, and Varaz

Lord Jericho
Chirag of
House Suren



d6 Flaw

1. I have trouble keeping secrets.
2. I don't like following orders.
3. I laugh at the worst times.
4. I secretly hold no loyalty to my house.
5. I'm very gullible.
6. I hate my job.

d6 Personality Trait

1. I am loyal to my house to a fault.
2. I seek to spread the power of my house.
3. I am loyal to a specific member of the house, but not to the wider family.
4. My loyalty is flexible for the right coin.
5. I am wont to talk about myself.
6. I am a good listener and say little myself.

d6 Ideal

1. Power: The strongest houses dominate one another.
2. Subterfuge: Safer to be in the shadows than the spotlight.
3. Religion: We must unite under the true pantheon, lest we be toppled from within.
4. Commerce: The best deals are just over the horizon!
5. Peace: Peace is good for maintaining order and stability.
6. War: In war the house can prove its merit.

d6 Bond

1. My mentor who introduced me to the house.
2. A fellow agent who I have served with numerous times.
3. A sweetheart I met while conducting my duties.
4. The head of the house who I feel get great respect and admiration.
5. My sword, it keeps me safe when carrying out my duty.
6. A story I was told once as a child.



Imperial Conscript

You served in the Imperial Army just before the shattering of the Imperial Dynasty. Conscripted from your home at a young age you joined thousands of others pulled from across the vast Empire in service to central Imperial authority. The Imperial Army was a skilled, professional organization with a long and storied history. Service was once synonymous with honor, but in their last decades the Imperial Army became remembered only for their brutality and ruthless efficiency in rooting out all those who the Emperor's paranoia turned against. Throughout the warring kingdoms the former conscripts are met with hostility and distrust. Many warlords outright refuse their service, with the notable exception of Queen Dai of Wei, who has gathered many of these lost soldiers to form an elite corps within her new kingdom's army. Many others have left the borders of the old Empire to sell their services elsewhere, with some finding luck in distant lands where their professional soldiery is appreciated.



Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Animal Handling

Tool Proficiencies: Proficiency with Go board, Vehicles (land)

Equipment: A seal of the Fallen Empire, a Go board with pieces, a set of crimson soldier's clothing, and a pouch containing 15 gold coins.

Feature: Soldier of the Fallen Empire

As a soldier of a now fallen Empire many within the new Kingdoms do not recognize your former rank and may react with hostility or fear. Loyalists and other former Imperial soldiers may still respect your seal and offer aid and shelter.

Suggested Characteristics

With their Emperor dead and their army broken many former Conscripts find themselves lost in a world that despises them. Others have found new purpose as they put their training to use where they can. Others still hide all trace of their former service and seek to distance themselves from the Empire they had no choice but to serve.

d8 Personality Trait

1. I am haunted by the failures of the past.
2. I boast about my great military feats and sometimes other people's.
3. I feel bitter resentment towards the symbols of the old Empire.
4. I protect the weak, no matter the cost.
5. I'll fight any battle anywhere for the right coin.
6. I'll never draw my blade first and only do so in defense.
7. I am quick to anger and quicker to draw blades.
8. I am filled with hatred for those who broke the Empire.

d6 Ideal

1. **Revenge:** I seek to cruelly punish those who have wronged me.
2. **Duty:** Though the name of the Imperial Army is tarnished I strive to uphold our ancient values.
3. **Glory:** I wish to see the restoration of the Empire and the warring kingdoms united.
4. **Honor:** I seek to find a worthy cause to fight for.
5. **Protector:** No matter where I am, I strive to help those in need.
6. **Consumed by loss,** I wander the lands a broken warrior, fighting, stealing, and killing as I need.

d6 Bond

1. I have kept my service weapon in pristine condition, it remains an extension of myself.
2. My horse is my closest companion.
3. I remain in contact with other former soldiers from my unit, they are like family to me.
4. The Imperial Seal I still carry, forever marking me as a member of the Empire.
5. My superior officer from my time in service, they offer sage advice.
6. My family, whom I miss dearly.

d6 Flaw

1. Even when in service, I worked poorly with others. I find it hard to make connections.
2. I am stubborn to a dangerous fault.
3. I lie even when there is no need to do so.
4. My belief in the Empire often causes me to get into fights when I hear others cheering its fall.
5. I am bad with directions and often get lost.
6. I am absent-minded and will sometimes forget to do regular tasks.

Tribune of the Plebs

One of Rome's most famous living orators, Lucius Poggioli is the current serving Tribune of the Plebs. The Tribune is the highest position a plebian can ascend to within Rome's politics. The tribune holds great power in the Roman hierarchy, able to call the Senate to session, propose new legislation, and even veto the consuls in matters relating to the plebians. Though this last power has proven diminished in the wake of Rome's conversion to an Empire, any assault of the Tribune's person, even by a patrician is punished with execution.

Orator

You have a way with words that few can match and a voice that can carry over the loudest crowds. Your duty was to convey the messages of your lords to the common folk.

Whether you were reading out the newest local events, the birth of a new heir, or a declaration of war, you always delivered your message with a voice of thunder that compelled those around to heed your words with bated breath.

Trusted in your community, most took the words you spoke to be gospel, even when you'd read out your lord's lies.

These skills have proven a great boon in your travels, as wherever you speak, a crowd will gather and give weight to that which you say.

Skill Proficiencies: Persuasion, Deception

Languages: Two of your choice.

Equipment: A scroll case containing past decrees, a container of hair wax, a set of fine clothes, and a bag containing 10 gold coins.

Feature: The People's Speaker

You know when and what to say to get a crowd calmed down, or riled up. Whenever you make a Persuasion check against a group of ten or more humanoids you gain advantage on the roll.

d6 Personality Trait

1. I am incredibly sociable.
2. I love nothing more than to shout the latest news to the people.
3. I use my way with words to get what I want.
4. I have a great love for music and poets.
5. I love the sound of my own voice and make sure I hear it often.
6. I am always the first to speak.

d6 Ideal

1. Power: Words are power, use them wisely.
2. Freedom: We must all be free to speak our minds.
3. Unity: Even one voice can unify people behind a cause with the right words.
4. Conflict: The best stories are inevitably drawn from the horrors of war.
5. Order: Use your voice to bring calmness and stability.
6. Pride: Be proud of what you do and who you are.

d6 Bond

1. The unwashed masses who flock to my words.
2. My teacher who taught me the proper way to spin words.
3. The sound of my own voice.
4. The orphans of the city hold a special place in my heart.
5. A certain someone who loves my voice almost as much as I do.
6. A scroll of poems which I draw hope from.

d6 Flaw

1. I am very dour and rarely see the good in a situation.
2. I cannot read.
3. I am averse to violence, why fight when you can speak?
4. I am greedy and charge heavily for my talents.
5. I hate people, but I am good at speaking to them.
6. I get nervous in front of large crowds.

*Tribune Lucius
Poggioli*



Palace Musician

You learned to perform not in the humble taverns where most of your profession make their living, but in the marbled courts of governors, magistrates, and ministers. You learned not just to perform and entertain but also the arts of courtly manner and intrigue.

While customs vary and personal choices range, Palace Bards are welcome in the halls of the wealthy and powerful from Londinium to Linzi. Those trained in foreign music and instruments are routinely sought out to entertain the ever-bored elite.

Skill Proficiencies: Performance, Persuasion

Tool Proficiencies: Two types of musical instruments (of your choice).

Equipment: A musical instrument (one of your choice), letter of recommendation (from a previous noble or administrator you've served), a set of fine clothes, and a pouch containing 25 gold coins.

Feature: Desired Entertainer

Palace Musicians are far more uncommon than their tavern kin. It is therefore not unknown for a Palace Musician to find themselves pursued by multiple elites. If a settlement is home to multiple lavish halls you have your pick of where to perform. As long as you perform daily, you will be provided with food and accommodations of a comfortable or wealthy standard.

Suggested Characteristics

While they are desired and respected to a point within the halls of the elite, Palace Musicians are never truly considered one of them. Though they speak familiarly with their fellow courtiers, Palace Musicians understand that they are still viewed as members of the lower class and often lack the haughty attitudes found in those around them.

d8 Personality Trait

1. I am forlorn and my music carries a haunting melody.
2. I never hold my tongue when it comes to bragging about my own exploits.
3. I hold great resentment for those whom I perform for, wishing I was one of them.
4. I cannot stand being second best and will do whatever I can to stay on top.
5. I'll perform any ballad anywhere for the right coin.
6. I love to share my arts, even with those too ill-off to afford me.
7. I am adept at defusing situations before they turn violent.
8. My temper can flare, especially when my work is insulted.



d6 Ideal

1. Love: Love is pure, and I seek to spread it.
2. Knowledge: I seek to learn the words and chords to every song.
3. Infamy: The greatest stories have tragic ends but sometimes they need to be helped along.
4. Riches: Food and lodging is well and good, but who's willing to pay the most coin?
5. Fame: Wealth is great, but what's the point if no one knows your name?
6. Loss: While loss is painful, I draw great inspiration from it.

d6 Bond

1. My instrument is an extension of myself.
2. The sounds of nature inspire every chord.
3. My teacher taught me all I know; I owe them everything.
4. I intend to play in the grand palaces of every nation.
5. The gods, who protected me during an ambush.
6. I had a patron at a previous court whom I grew quite attached to.

d6 Flaw

1. I am a perfectionist and will not perform unless I am sure it will be perfect.
2. My patrons offer me bountiful food and a little too much drink.
3. I enraged a previous patron who still has a bounty on my head.
4. I must always see the story to its end, retreating is difficult for me.
5. I have grown to despise entertaining others and lament having no other means of survival.
6. It takes a long time for me to begin trusting my allies.

Patrician

You were born into one of Rome's ancient Patrician dynasties. A descendant of one of the original one-hundred senators, yours is an ancient and proud line.

Though the Conflict of Orders centuries past has diminished the standing of the Patrician families from their height in the mid-Republic era, you still remain a head above the plebians of Rome. Lavish was your upbringing, trained by the finest scholars and tacticians and attended to by the best-trained slaves, you have wanted for nothing save adventure.

Now that you have come of age, your family expects great things of you, and though you ultimately expect to one day find yourself in the gilded halls of governance, you first wish to strike out into the world to see what it has to offer beyond the colonnades of wealth and power.

Skill Proficiencies: Intimidation, Insight

Tool Proficiencies: One artisan's tool or instrument of your choice.

Language: One of your choice.

Equipment: A set of fine clothing bearing your family crest, a scroll of pedigree, a set of fine shoes or sandals, and a bag containing 30 gold coins.

Feature: Always Attended

You begin with three servants (or slaves) attending to you. One of these will be a chef, able to cook you fine meals even in the wild. One will be a cleaner, washing your clothes, tent, and bedding to ensure you are kept clean, they will also draw and warm your baths. The final will be a hairdresser and beautician, that will keep you looking beautiful and elaborately displayed so that all you encounter may know you come from a higher stratum.

Though they are loyal to you and will follow your commands they will not fight or willingly die for you.

d6 Personality Trait

1. I know I am above those of lesser birth and will flaunt it openly.
2. I fear losing my position in this world.
3. I rarely travel, anything important can come to me.
4. I seek to help those less fortunate than myself.
5. I am very generous with my coin.
6. I am incredibly stingy.

d6 Ideal

1. Influence: To hold sway over others is one of the great joys of life.
2. Politics: True influence lies in politics, one must master the halls of power.
3. Excess: To indulge in pleasure is the meaning of life.
4. Wealth: Politics and power involve a lot of danger, better to be rich and obscure.
5. Peace: Conflict only brings ruin with it. Peace is the path to stability.
6. Chaos: Chaos is a ladder.

d6 Bond

1. A loyal servant with whom I cannot do without.
2. My wealth, symbol of my power.
3. My family, to whom I owe everything.
4. I feel a strong sympathy for urchins and street children, realizing I could have been born as one.
5. There is a member of another patrician family that I have strong feelings for.
6. A signet ring that reminds me of my past, and future.

d6 Flaw

1. I have an annoying voice.
2. I am quick to anger, especially towards the lower class.
3. I am a coward; I rarely leave the walls of my manse.
4. I am overly gregarious and often don't know when to shut up.
5. My greed often clouds my judgement.
6. I am overly generous and it often threatens my finances.

Playwright

From a young age you took great interest in the beauty of the stage. Enthralled by the stories and those who told them, you strove to become one of them.

Though you hope to one day return home and put your own adventures to pen and stage, you know, deep inside, that the greatest stories always end in tragedy.

Skill Proficiencies: Performance, History,

Tool Proficiencies: Calligraphers tools, one musical instrument of your choice.

Equipment: A set of common clothes, a set of Calligrapher's supplies, a scroll containing a previously written play, and a bag containing 10 gold coins.

Feature: Attendant Troupe

You have a troupe of actors that have performed in dozens of your plays that you are able to call upon. While in your home settlement you will have access to a dozen well-trained actors to perform in your plays. While traveling, you may have up to three of these actors accompany you. They will perform in any plays you write, for a fee of course. You may set the price to attend your shows, but each of the actors will expect a cut. When performing in your home settlement this will be a five-percent cut per actor, while traveling this is raised to ten-percent.

d6 Personality Trait

1. I know that I trained at the world's greatest theatres and think little of those who learned elsewhere.
2. I have lost myself in my work and often have difficulty separating reality from the stage.
3. I dote on my actors like an overbearing father.
4. I have played so many characters that I sometimes lose track of who I am.
5. I have great resentment for playwrights who garner more success than I do.
6. I greatly prefer writing plays to acting in them.

d6 Ideal

1. Performance: Putting on a good show that people enjoy is worth its weight in gold.
2. Freedom: The authorities should not dictate what is proper content for a play!
3. Teamwork: A writer without a troupe is nothing but a dreamer.
4. Sacrifice: A good performance takes sweat and sometimes blood.
5. Peace: Safe venues are rare in times of war.
6. War: Conflict inspires the greatest stories.

d6 Bond

1. My troupe, without whom I would be nothing.
2. The theatre where we performed back home.
3. The cheering crowds, inspired by our stories.
4. The script of my favorite play, that inspired me to write.
5. I only truly feel whole when I have a pen in my hand and parchment on the table.
6. My family, who supported my early efforts.

d6 Flaw

1. I have poor penmanship.
2. I am slow to recognize sarcasm.
3. I try to see the best in everyone, even those who truly don't deserve it.
4. I care too much what people say about my plays.
5. I can't write or read and must dictate my plays.
6. I can't stand watching my own performances on stage.

Sea Serpent

You were one of the Sea Serpents, the feared raiders from the Illyrian coast. You've pillaged towns from Albion to Judea and crossed blades with every culture across the Mediterranean and Atlantic.

Despite any misgivings you may (or may not) have about your history, you cannot escape it. The Sea Serpent's mark, a black serpent crushing a trireme, is tattooed across your back. This symbol is recognizable to all who live in the coastal settlements of the Mediterranean and they will

react poorly should your past be discovered. The mark is less known the further inland you go, and the eastern powers in China and India will likely have no recognition of the marking, allowing easier travel.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Intimidation

Tool Proficiencies: One musical instrument or gaming set of your choice.

Languages: One of your choice.

Equipment: A wrist band with the symbol of your former ship, a set of dark common clothes, a letter bearing your captain's final orders, and a bag containing 10 gold coins.

Feature: Serpent's Own.

Your former status among the Sea Serpents gives you sway with other Illyrian raiders you may come across. Any Sea Serpents or sympathetic Illyrians you encounter will provide you aid and shelter should you show them your Serpent's mark.

Feature: Decent Places

The Sea Devils are not welcome in the settlements outside of Illyria (at least not the decent ones) and should your history, or Devil's mark, be discovered, the local authorities will move to have you imprisoned or killed, unless you have an incredibly compelling reason to be in their settlement.

d6 Personality Trait

1. I don't like killing, but I love a good brawl.
2. I want to retire from this life, but there's nothing else for me.
3. I love sailing into new horizons.
4. I always have to prove myself, especially in front of the crew.
5. I love to listen and rarely speak up myself.
6. I love the small comforts of good food and drink.

d6 Ideal

1. Power: The sea can grant you many things if you know how to use it.
2. Revenge: Those who betray their comrades can never be forgiven.

3. Reliability: A crew must be able to rely on one another.
4. Skill: Being the best requires both talent and practice.
5. Glory: Nothing is more noble than victorious combat.
6. Plunder: The greatest bounty requires the most risk.

d6 Bond

1. My crew who are like family to me.
2. Illyria, which represents freedom from the Empire.
3. My ship, my true home.
4. I have someone back at port that I would give it all up for.
5. I would never betray my captain.
6. I do what I do for my family in need.

d6 Flaw

1. I speak my mind too often before those I shouldn't.
2. I am illiterate.
3. I am too timid and rarely assert myself.
4. I have an addiction to gambling.
5. I get sea sick.
6. I boast about my history even where and when I shouldn't.

Sem Priest

Dating from before the founding of the pharaonic dynasties, the Sem Priests of Egypt remain some of the most well-respected of all clergy positions. Experts at the arts of embalming and mummification, Sem Priests are responsible for the care and preparation of the deceased as they make their final transition to the afterlife. To this end, Sem Priests tirelessly study the ritual spells and incantations contained in The Book of the Dead, an ancient text that was once reserved only for the most deserving. During the reign of the Pharaohs of the Old Kingdom, only the Pharaoh him or herself was guaranteed the eternal reward of an afterlife, but over the millennia this service has become attainable by even members of the lower class that can afford it.

Skill Proficiencies: Medicine and Religion

Tool Proficiencies: Embalmer's Tools

Languages: One of your choice.

Equipment: A set of Embalmer's Tools, a leopard-skin cloak, a copy of The Book of the Dead in the form of a papyrus codex, and a bag containing 10 gold coins.

Feature: Chosen of Osiris

The leopard cloak you wear serves as your badge of office, and is instantly recognizable to anyone familiar with Egyptian culture. Representing Osiris' victory over Set, the leopard cloak marks you as one with an intimate understanding of the balance of life and death. You are free to roam wherever your duties take you, and are welcome in even the most private sanctum or tomb, as to bar your entry would be to invite the wrath of the gods. Only a High Priest or the Pharaoh have true authority over you, but even they would think twice before interfering in your sacred rites.

Suggested Characteristics

Sem Priests tend to be disciplined, reserved, and unflappable. Being well-acquainted with death in all its many forms, they are less likely to be disturbed by the morbid or grotesque, and often rely on dark humor others might find distasteful. The job can take its toll, however, and not all go unaffected by the daily exposure to the deceased and the mourners they leave behind. Some Sem Priests take solace in lighter pursuits as a means of separating their personal lives from their occupations, but for many their macabre task becomes itself a way of life.

d8 Personality Trait

1. I take great pride in my work. A well-preserved mummy is a true work of art.
2. I am deeply sympathetic to those experiencing loss. Consoling families is often the most important aspect of my job.
3. I have an intensely morbid outlook. Death is inevitable, so working hard to avoid it is pointless.
4. My proximity to death has given me a greater appreciation of life. I live every day to its fullest.

5. I am very selective in choosing to whom I provide my services. Not everyone deserves an afterlife.

6. I can often be persuaded to work for free. Being poor shouldn't deny you a proper burial.

7. I remember every soul I've worked on. I keep careful records, or collect mementos of the deceased.

8. My ambitions are lofty. I worship and study relentlessly in hopes of one day becoming High Priest.

d6 Ideal

1. Faith. I trust that the judgment of the gods is fair. So long as I obey their will, I shall be rewarded.

2. Duty. The service I provide is not just important, it is necessary. I shall not shirk my responsibilities.

3. Knowledge. Pursuit of the hidden secrets of the world drives me to study scrolls and texts with ravenous interest.

4. Diligence. I understand that the nature of my profession demands a keen attention to detail. I make no mistakes.

5. Altruism. My services extend to the living as well as the dead. I practice medicine to keep the sick and wounded off of my embalming table.

6. Stoicism. My time spent with the dead has shown me that vibrant emotions remain a luxury of the living.

d6 Bond

1. I work with a partner that I've known for years. We rely on one another's particular talents.

2. Though my training is long complete, the High Priest of my temple remains my personal mentor.

3. I remain in touch with many of the families to whom I provided my services.

4. The local nomarch has called on me to perform the Rites of the Dead on certain nobility in the past.

5. A foreign scholar has taken keen interest in Egyptian culture and sees my work as a point of study.

6. I sometimes visit the tomb of a relative to provide customary offerings.

d6 Flaw

1. I have a callous disposition which many find off-putting.

2. My obsession with the afterlife grows by the day. I find the world in which I currently reside dull by comparison.

3. I have no fear of death. A complete lack of self-preservation has nearly cost me my life on more than one occasion.

4. I deeply distrust adherents of other religions, and even worshipers of Egyptian gods different from my own.

5. My greed has been known to get the best of me. I sometimes steal offerings intended for the deceased.

6. I am deeply lonely. Sometimes I feel as if only the dead truly understand me.



Sovereign Scholar

The Three Sovereign Academies have stood for millennia as the foremost institutes of collected knowledge, both magical and mundane.

You were raised within one of the three Sovereign Academies. You learned history, arcana, and beautiful calligraphy. Like the other children raised in the care of the Academies you were orphaned at a young age. As a young adult you spent your days helping travelers from near and far in their studies at your academy.

You may or may not be magically inclined, but many of those who seek your assistance in searching the vast libraries are.

Skill Proficiencies: History and Arcana. In addition, you receive one of the following based on your chosen academy.

Fu Xi Academy — Nature

Nuwa Academy — Athletics

Shennong Academy — Insight

Tool Proficiencies: Calligrapher's tools.

Equipment: Calligrapher's tools, a seal of recognition from your chosen academy, a set of fine clothes, and a bag containing 10 gold coins.

Feature: Sovereign's Welcome

While civil war pits countryman against countryman and kingdoms eye one another with heavy paranoia, there remain a select few organizations that may travel in relative safety. Such is the honor of the Sovereign Academies' officials that you are welcome in all of The Five Kingdoms. Nobility and wealthy merchants will be willing to offer you modest to comfortable lodging and food in exchange for your scholarly advice or the tutelage of their children.

In addition, guards are more likely to let you talk your way out of minor infractions within the Five Kingdoms.

Suggested Characteristics

Sovereign Scholars are often known for their calm demeanor and slowness to anger. This makes them well-suited to diplomacy and mediation. Though hardly uniformly, the majority of Sovereign Scholars tend toward Lawful Neutral alignment.

d8 Personality Trait

1. I know that I studied at the world's greatest academies and think little of those who learned elsewhere.
2. I am eager to spread my knowledge and will happily share with those who wish to learn.
3. I rarely travel beyond the walls of my academy and am quite nervous when doing so.
4. I never truly took to life in the academy and wish I were doing something else.
5. I am quite stingy with my knowledge and share it only with those I deem worthy.
6. I prefer the company of books to my fellow scholars.
7. I often share even when my opinion is not welcome.
8. I take poorly to criticism of my calligraphy.

d6 Ideal

1. Power: Some say knowledge is power; I saw knowledge lets me know that power is power. I seek to concentrate as much in my hands as I can.
2. Freedom: For too long the small people of the world have been trampled by those above. I seek to free those who toil below.
3. Unity: Only together can we stand, both as individuals and nations.
4. Sacrifice: Some causes are worth dying for. I would give my life for what I believe.
5. Peace: Conflict only brings ruin with it. Peace is the path to stability.
6. War: History is quite clear, the only way to reunite the Empire is through the blood and sweat of conflict.

d6 Bond

1. My calligraphy set; I never feel complete if I cannot write at the end of a long day.
2. The Academy; it's home and where I feel I belong.

3. Knowledge is the only company I need.
4. I feel a strong sympathy for urchins and street children, realizing how close I came to being one.
5. There's a special someone back at the Academy that I can't wait to see again.
6. I feel a great disconnect from those around me. I do not know what I seek.

d6 Flaw

1. While I was trained in it, I have never been much good at calligraphy, my writing is nearly illegible.
2. I hate reading, yet there always seems to be another scroll that needs copying!
3. I am a coward; I prefer to remain safely in the libraries where I belong.
4. I am quite greedy and have been known to take from the donation crates before they are counted.
5. I will seek knowledge even at great expense to my health and pocketbook.
6. I grow resentful of those who seem to know more than me.

Wanderer

For as long as you can remember you have wandered, never remaining in one place longer than you need to rest or restock. You hold no allegiance to any of the world's realms and may not know in which you were even born.

The borders of the world's kingdoms and empires are meaningless to you and you do not recognize the authority of these states to limit your freedom to travel where you will, when you will.

While this does occasionally bring you into conflict with the authorities, it has afforded you the opportunity to see, learn, and do things that few others can claim. You have friends across the width and breadth of the world and from Albion to Wei you can call upon the friends you have met through your travels.

Skill Proficiencies: Nature, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: Proficiency with one artisan's tool of your choice.

Languages: One of your choice.

Equipment: A set of traveler's clothes, one artisan's tool set of your choice, an explorer's pack, and a bag containing 5 gold coins.

Feature: Borderless

Your journeys have taken you to all corners of the world and have taught you much. You may select two additional languages and one additional tool at character creation and gain proficiency with these.

d6 Personality Trait

1. I can never sit still and always strive to be on the move.
2. I want to know it all and am always asking questions.
3. I prefer sleeping under the stars.
4. I travel because my home has dark memories.
5. I'm always seeking new friends in new places.
6. When reaching new places, I can't help but smile.

d6 Ideal

1. Knowledge: I travel to learn. The world is an open book to those who can read it.
2. Freedom: The despots of the world should not stifle the free travel of individuals.
3. Exploration: New horizons and experiences are always around the corner.
4. Culture: The world has too much to offer to be tied to one place.
5. Joy: Conflict only brings ruin with it. Peace is the path to stability.
6. Misery: The past is haunted, so it's best to keep away from it.

d6 Bond

1. A walking stick I have had with me since home.
2. I have someone in a town I once visited I hope to visit again.
3. I was stuck once; I never will be again.
4. I have a soft spot for the forgotten of society.
5. My home town is a good place and I would do anything to protect it.
6. A small animal I found in my travels is now my constant companion.

d6 Flaw

1. I don't realize when I'm not wanted.
2. I rarely know where my next coin will come from.
3. I go so long without proper meals that I often overeat to the point of sickness when food is in abundance.
4. I have a bad temper and have made enemies in many towns I've visited.
5. I sometimes slip into the wrong language mid conversation, often to great offense.
6. My wanderlust precludes me from making strong connections.

Beyond Borders

Magnus Rock is a wanderer of especially great exploits. Having traveled most of the known world, Magnus has obtained a collection of weapons, armors, and oddities from across a dozen cultures. His homeland remains a mystery, though some believe he hails from the southern tip of Hispania.



Magnus Rock

Languages

Across the world of Age of Antiquity a large number of languages were spoken historically. For the included cultures in this book we have simplified these down into the listed below.

Though several languages, such as Latin and Greek, are lingua franca for large areas there is no universal common language by default. GMs should speak with their players regarding whether or not to include a common trade language in addition to specific regional languages.

Aramaic (Parthian)

Breton (Celtic)

Chinese

Egyptian

Gaulish (Celtic)

Germanic

Greek

Hebrew

Iberian

Illyrian

Latin

Meroitic (Kush)

Pahlawānīg (Parthian)

Subclasses

Barbarian: Path of the Blood-Caster

The warriors of the Germanic tribes know no equal in ferocity. They wade into open combat, greatly outnumbered, backed only by the fervor of their bloodlust. This violent disregard for life has led a select few to discover the ability to channel their rage into bursts of magic. The process is often unreliable and brutal; however, for the Blood-Caster, any edge over an opponent must be seized.

Class Features

Spellcasting

When you reach 3rd level, you gain the ability to cast spells.

Blood Magic

Starting at 3rd level, you are able to cast spells and concentrate on them, even while raging. Your rage will not end if you cast a spell on your turn.

Cantrips. Due to the explosive and inconsistent nature of your magic, you are unable to cast cantrips.

Spell Slots. The Blood Magic table shows how many spell slots you have to cast your spells of 1st level and higher. To cast one of these spells, you must expend a slot of the spell's level or higher. You regain all expended spell slots when you finish a long rest.

You may choose your spells from any spell list. You may only choose evocation and transmutation spells; however, one of your known spells may be from any magic school. Additionally, when you gain a level in this class, you can choose one of the spells you know and replace it with another spell, which also must be of a level for which you have spell slots.

Constitution is your spellcasting ability for your spells, so you use your Constitution whenever a spell refers to your spellcasting ability. In addition, you use your Constitution modifier when setting the saving throw DC for a spell you cast and when making an attack roll with one.

Spell save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier

Spell attack modifier = your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier

Blood Magic Table

Class Level	Spells Known	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1st	-	-	-	-	-
2nd	-	-	-	-	-
3rd	3	2	-	-	-
4th	4	3	-	-	-
5th	4	3	-	-	-
6th	4	3	-	-	-
7th	5	4	2	-	-
8th	6	4	2	-	-
9th	6	4	2	-	-
10th	7	4	3	-	-
11th	8	4	3	-	-
12th	8	4	3	-	-
13th	9	4	3	2	-
14th	10	4	3	2	-
15th	10	4	3	2	-
16th	11	4	3	3	-
17th	11	4	3	3	-
18th	11	4	3	3	-
19th	12	4	3	3	1
20th	13	4	3	3	1

blōtanan

Starting at 6th level, your fury pushes the capabilities of magic beyond instinct for self-preservation. You may choose to cast a spell even if you have no spell slots available. When you do this, sacrifice a number of hit dice equal to the spell's level. Roll the hit dice and take damage equal to the result plus your Barbarian level. This damage is unable to be mitigated or prevented in any way. You may only cast a spell in this way if you are already capable of casting the spell. Once you have used this feature, you cannot use it again until you take a short or long rest. Your hit dice recover normally.

Furious Weave

Starting at 10th level, magic boils in your blood ready to explode at the slightest provocation. As a reaction to taking damage from an enemy you can see, you may cast a spell that normally has a casting time of 1 Action or 1 Bonus Action. If you are raging, you may add your Barbarian level and Constitution modifier to the spell's damage.

Wītagōn of Red

Starting at 14th level, you have either learned to embrace the volatile chaos of your magic or hone it into a more deliberate weapon. Choose one of the following.

Blood for Blood. When you cast a single-target spell, you may sacrifice any number of hit dice and roll them. Add the result to the spell's damage and take half the damage yourself. The damage to yourself is unable to be mitigated or prevented in any way.

Controlled Carnage. Gain a permanent hit die. This does not affect your maximum hit points but can be used to regain hit points and be used with your other Blood-Caster abilities. Additionally, your limit for Spells Known increases by 2.

Berserker's Martyrdom

Starting at 14th level, your boundless rage drives both body and soul past the limits of mortality. When you enter a rage, you may choose to burn all the magic within you at once and go berserk. You may remain in this state for 1d6 rounds. While in this state, you gain advantage on spell attack rolls, your spell damage is always treated as the maximum possible number, and enemies have disadvantage on saving throws against your spells. Once you exit the frenzy, you immediately drop to 0 hit points and are not stable.

Barbarian: Path of the Gladiator

Gladiators are the lords of the arena. Skilled both at arms and showmanship, the most successful gladiators are those who can entertain as well as they can fight. Whether slaves fighting for their freedom, captured soldiers pressed into combat, or glory seekers hungry for their name to be known, those that can stay alive while keeping the crowds on their side will find themselves showered with wealth and fame.

Class Features

Across the Arena

Starting at 3rd level, after moving 20 feet in a straight line while wielding a shield you may use a bonus action to attempt to bash a target of Large or smaller size. Make a contested Strength (Athletics) check. If you succeed, the target is pushed back 5 feet and knocked prone.

Crowd Pleaser

Years in the arena have taught you how to get the crowd's attention and how to turn them to your side.

Starting at 6th level, you may add both your Charisma and Strength modifiers when making Performance or Persuasion checks.

In addition, you have advantage on rolls to resist the effects of being charmed.

Brutal Mockery

You have learned that the best gladiators don't just know what to say to get the crowds cheering, they also know how to get under an opponent's skin with more than just a blade.

Starting at 10th level, when an opponent within 60 feet of you misses an attack roll, you may use your reaction to mock their failure. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + Charisma modifier + proficiency bonus). If they fail, the target is discouraged. Until the end of its next turn the creature has disadvantage on all attack rolls. You may use this ability a number

of times equal to 1+ your Charisma modifier, minimum 1 per day. These charges refresh after you take a long rest.

No Mercy

When you fight in the arena, you win or you die. There is no place for mercy, no time for second thoughts. You know your opponents wouldn't give you any.

Starting at 14th level, whenever you attack a prone target while raging you score a critical on an 18-20.

Cleric: Plague Domain

"So said the Lord, At the dividing point of the night, I will go out into the midst of Egypt, and every firstborn in the land of Egypt will die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne to the firstborn of the slave woman who is behind the millstones, and every firstborn animal. And there will be a great cry throughout the entire land of Egypt, such as there never has been and such as there shall never be again."

Clerics of the Plague Domain are heralds of divine purpose and enforcers of that will. Those who would defy the will of God bring ruin upon themselves. The two primary focuses of the Plague Domain are widespread destruction and compelling the unholy to obey divine authority. You are the shepherd of the faultless that leaves a wake of terror. Those who do not cower before the might of the Lord will know his vengeance. The collateral damage left behind will act as testimony to those who would act defiantly with evil in their hearts.

Class Features

Plague Domain Spells

Class Spells

Level

1st Color Spray, Fog Cloud, Thunderwave

3rd Darkness, Ray of Enfeeblement,
Suggestion

5th Call Lightning, Conjure Animals, Fear

7th Blight, Compulsion, Phantasmal Killer

9th Cloudkill, Dominate Person,
Wall of Force

Voice of the Lord

At 1st level, you learn the Prestidigitation and Thaumaturgy cantrips, which don't count against the number of cleric cantrips you know.

Bonus Proficiency

When you choose this domain at 1st level, you gain proficiency in the Persuasion and Intimidation skills.

Channel Divinity: God's Decree

Starting at 2nd level, as an action you can give a target within earshot a simple one sentence command. This command must be something that they can physically achieve. Until the target fulfills this command, they have disadvantage on saving throws versus your spells and abilities.

Shepherd of the Chosen

Starting at 6th level, when you cast a harmful spell or effect, you may choose a number of targets up to your level that are immune to the effect.

Divine Ruin

At 8th level, you gain the ability to infuse your weapon strikes and single-target spells with divine energy. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon attack or single-target spell, you can cause the attack to deal an extra 1d8 radiant damage to the target. When you reach 14th level, the extra damage increases to 2d8.

Angel of Death

At 17th level, when you cast Channel Divinity: God's Decree, choose one additional effect:

Blood of the Ram. All life within up to your cleric level in miles of your target rapidly falls to desolation. Crops wilt and die, livestock grow ill, and mild sickness turns to terminal disease. You may set any conditions that others may fulfill to become immune to these effects. Those within the area of effect know the target of God's Decree is to blame for their suffering.

Let My People Go! The target of God's Decree now has disadvantage on saving throws versus all spells and abilities, instead of only your own. If the target does not fulfill the command by the next sunrise, the effect spreads to those around them the target considers allies. Additionally, the effect imposes disadvantage on all skill checks as misfortune befalls all. God's Decree may only be resolved by the original target.

Bard: College of Orpheus

After the tragedy of Orpheus and Eurydice, the bard emerged from the Underworld and wandered alone — forsaking all desire to lay with beautiful women. He instead found pleasure in continuing his musical journey and seeking comfort in the company of young boys. Many women across Greece chastised him for his rejection of them. The most fervent of these women were Ciconian followers of Dionysus. Enraged, the women threw rocks and sticks at him. However, the tone of his lyre was so enthralling that the rocks and sticks would not dare touch him. Thrown into a frenzy, the women tore his flesh to pieces. His head and lyre still sang and tuned so the women tossed him in the river. His remains washed up on the isle of Lesbos and the inhabitants buried his head. It is said that the Muses themselves carried his lyre up to the heavens to place it amongst the stars.

Class Features

Performative Defense

Starting at 3rd level, while you are wearing no armor and not wielding a shield, your AC equals 10 + your Dexterity modifier + your Charisma modifier. This does not stack with any other forms of AC such as Unarmored Defense.

Distracting Inspiration

Starting at 3rd level, when you grant a Bardic Inspiration die to an ally, they gain additional benefits. Before they consume the Bardic Inspiration die, they gain advantage on Hide rolls and can take the Hide, Disengage, or Dash actions as a bonus action. If they already have the ability to take these actions as a bonus action, they can take them again.

You also gain the ability to place a Bardic Inspiration die on an enemy. When you do this, the target has disadvantage to attack anyone but you. When the target makes an attack or uses a harmful spell or ability directed at you, whether they hit or miss they take psychic damage equal to your Bardic Inspiration die as their mind is wounded for daring to harm something so beautiful. This does not consume the die. An ally may choose to consume this die by attacking the target and adding the Bardic Inspiration die normally.

Magnum Opus

Starting at 6th level, you master a musical piece that draws the jealous ire of aggressors and the admiration of all. As an action, begin your performance and force all hostile creatures within 60 feet to make a Charisma saving throw. If they fail the saving throw, they are forced to target you with their attacks and abilities as their jealousy flies them into a rage. If a target is damaged by anyone except you, the target is no longer affected by this ability. If you move further than 60 feet away from a target, they are no longer affected by this ability. You may choose to stop your performance as a free action. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish

a long rest. Starting at 13th level, you gain an additional usage of this feature before requiring a long rest.

Everlasting Performance

Starting at 14th level, the very fabric of your existence is a vessel for exquisite music. Much like a legendary composition, you have become so iconic that you are extremely difficult to truly erase from this world. Upon reaching 0 hit points, you do not fall unconscious. Instead, your body becomes limp and useless but you retain the use of your eyes, ears, and mouth. If you succumb to death your body is lost forever, however you live on as a talking head. If your head is completely destroyed, you are truly dead. There are several methods for your continued existence.

I Am Reborn! The 7th level spell Resurrection is capable of fully restoring your body.

Dubious Means. With handful of talent and a heaping supply of moral flexibility, the Greater Restoration spell may be used to attach your head to a freshly deceased humanoid corpse. This messy process takes a full week to perform. After this week, you have full control of your new body but have disadvantage on all skill and ability checks, saving throws, and attack rolls for an additional week as you adjust to your new body.

Getting Ahead in Life. You choose to live on as a severed head. You no longer have the ability to take any action that would require the use of your body. You can, however, still cast spells using your lovely voice as a spellcasting focus. You may either be carried around by your very generous companions or employ a more magical means of transportation. You may exchange one of your spell choices from the Magical Secrets feature to the cantrip Mage Hand, having the spectral hand carry you around. Moving by this method requires near constant focus. You can take no actions of any kind besides moving and making idle conversation. Deactivating Mage Hand will cause you to fall, potentially incurring falling damage at double the usual rate due to your lack of ability to protect yourself.

Bard: College of Philosophy

Emerging from the end of the Dark Ages of Greece, philosophical thinking marked the beginning of a new era. Titans of free-thinking such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle debated and published works on the nature of humanity and our place in the universe. These ideas drove civilization to a higher standard and simultaneously pitted conservative religious groups against them. Socrates, one of the most acclaimed philosophers of all time, was put to death for impiety and poisoning the minds of the young. There will always be opposition to intellectuals who desire change, however truly powerful rhetoric can change the course of history.

Class Features

Civilized Decorum

When you join the College of Philosophy at 3rd level, you gain advantage on all Persuasion rolls. You can cast the spell *Calm Emotions* without expending a spell slot once per long rest.

Existential Crisis

Starting at 6th level, your rhetoric can take hold in the minds of others and drive them into spiraling thought. As a bonus action, you may expend a Bardic Inspiration die and force a target within 30 feet to make an Intelligence saving throw against your spell save DC. If they fail, they are overwhelmed with ideas and paradoxes. Every time the creature makes a roll, they must also roll the Bardic Inspiration die and subtract its result from their roll total. If they roll the highest number on the Bardic Inspiration die, they are stunned until the beginning of their next turn. At the end of the creature's turn, they can make an Intelligence saving throw again to end the effect. Creatures with Intelligence 4 or lower are immune to this feature. You do not need to share a language with the creature; however, they must be able to comprehend language.

Moving Rhetoric

Starting at 14th level, your ideas and musings captivate the minds and souls of those around you. You can deliver a speech that can change stubborn minds and bolster existing dispositions. Given one minute, those within 60 feet of you are affected by one of the following.

Confirmation Bias. You perform a moving lecture bolstering the already existing opinions of the crowd. Any who passively held beliefs about the topic you are speaking on now feel compelled to act. They gain inspiration which can only be used within the next hour and must be used for a roll related to your lecture.

Convincing Argument. You openly challenge the point of view of your opposition and provide a compelling debate against them. Those who oppose your view must make an Intelligence saving throw versus your spell save DC. If they fail, they are charmed and have disadvantage on skill and ability checks in pursuit of their original viewpoint for one hour.

This feature is a magical effect. The creatures do not know they are being affected by magic during or after the effects wear off. Creatures with Intelligence 4 or lower are immune to this feature. You must share a language with your targets or have a translator for this feature to function.

Bard: College of Ricochets

Legends tell of a harp wielded by the Dagda, a mighty father god of the Tuatha Dé Danann. The Dagda represents fertility, nature, fatherhood, and druidic wisdom. It was said that by playing a special chord on his harp, he could change the seasons and incite intense emotion. This great instrument was stolen from him by the mortal enemies of the Tuatha Dé - the Fomorians. Try as they may, they could not get the harp to produce sound, as it would only produce sound for the Dagda. At his command, the Dagda summoned the harp and it flew with haste back to him killing nine men on the way.

Class Features

Harper of the Dagda

When you join the College of Ricochets, you come into possession of a unique custom-made instrument — the Uaithne. An intricately crafted tool of beauty and violence, the Uaithne is lightweight, nigh unbreakable, and most importantly — bladed. Through a ritual concert of astounding magic, the Uaithne has been bound to you. It will always return to you when called upon.

The Uaithne is a musical instrument and exotic weapon that you are proficient in. It has the Finesse and Thrown properties, a range of 30/60, and deals 1d8 damage. As a bonus action, you can command the Uaithne to return to you as long as it is on the same plane as you. It will by default take the most direct path possible doing whatever damage necessary along the way.

The innate magical nature of the Uaithne gives it several unique properties. No one but you may produce music from the harp. Any attempts to pluck the strings result in silence. The Uaithne holds one charge which you may use to cast Heroism, Sleep, or Tasha's Hideous Laughter. The harp regains one charge after a long rest.

Whirling Ripper

Starting at 3rd level, after you make a thrown attack with the Uaithne, whether it hits or misses, you can choose to have it occupy an adjacent space to your target and float midair. While the Uaithne is floating this way, you can use your reaction to make opportunity attacks as if you were standing there. As an action, you can make melee and thrown attacks as if you were standing in that space. The Uaithne cannot be controlled in this way further than 60 feet from you.

Accurate Arc

Starting at 6th level, you adapt to the intricate aerodynamics of the Uaithne and hone your throw. Choose one of the following options.

Backspin. If you miss a thrown attack with the Uaithne, you can make an attack with advantage against another target within 30 feet of you as the instrument returns. This unexpected blow deals an additional amount of damage equal to your Charisma modifier.

Dúnmharú Preab. When you hit a thrown attack with the Uaithne, it ricochets violently with murderous intent. Make an additional attack against another target within 15 feet of your original target at disadvantage. You can continue making attacks this way at a cumulative -1 per target until you miss.

Phantasmal Duplicate

Starting at 14th level, the magical bond between you and your instrument is so intense, you can create a duplicate of the Uaithne made of pure magical resonance. When you use your action to make a thrown attack with the Uaithne, a duplicate appears in your hand. You can use your bonus action to make a thrown attack with the duplicate. The duplicate disappears at the end of your turn.

Additionally, you can cast the spell Control Weather without consuming a spell slot. Once you cast this spell, you cannot use it again until you finish a long rest.

Cleric: Fortune Domain

Throughout the history of humankind, we have prayed to the gods for good luck. It is in our nature to wish that things beyond our realm of control will simply work out. As a Cleric of Fortune, you have devoted yourself to a deity of destiny and hope. Your connection to the divine brings favor unto you and your companions. Gods of fortune include Tyche (Greek), Fortuna (Roman), Vesunna (Celtic), Renenutet (Egyptian), Manat (Arabian), and Nortia (Etruscan).

Class Features

Fortune Spells

Class Spells

Level

1st Heroism, Shield

3rd Blur, Invisibility

5th Counterspell, Nondetection

7th Faithful Hound, Stoneskin

9th Mislead, Telepathic Bond

Pushing Probability

Starting at 1st level, luck fluctuates around you in mysterious ways. On any single dice roll that is rolled by any creature, you may use your reaction to impose advantage or disadvantage. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus before requiring a long rest. The more you use this feature, the greater the chance of your luck running out. When you use this feature, roll a d20. If the result is 1-5, the next time you use this feature downgrade the die rolled as follows — d20 > d12 > d10 > d8 > d6. Once you are unable to downgrade the die any more, your luck has run out and becomes unstable. Now when you use this feature there is a 50% chance that the target will receive the opposite effect. After the opposite effect has been experienced 3 times, your luck returns and the die resets back to a d20.

Channel Divinity: Fortuitous Opening

Starting at 2nd level, as a reaction to a creature taking damage, you can use your Channel Divinity to immediately let the creature take an action. This action is in addition to any actions they may take during this round.

Slippery

Starting at 6th level, your luck is so fruitful that you gain +1 AC. Additionally, if an enemy misses a melee attack against you and is adjacent to another enemy, they must make a Charisma saving throw versus your spell save DC. If they fail, they swing into their companion using the same attack roll.

Destined Result

Starting at 8th level, when you deal damage with an attack or spell you may add 1d8 radiant damage. At level 14, this becomes 2d8 radiant damage.

Incredible Convenience

Starting at 17th level, situations work out in your favor due to bafflingly convenient circumstances. As an action and with your GM's approval, you can introduce an element to the story that resolves an issue for you that would otherwise inconvenience you. This could be a situation such as remembering that you stashed a standard handcuff key in your belt or noticing that there are three horses left unguarded you could use to escape on. Keep this within the realm of realism for your game world. Your GM has absolute discretion to deny your usage of this ability at any time. Once you have used this feature, you cannot use it again until you take a long rest.

Druid: Circle of Augury

The augurs of Rome were a highly respected class of prophets integrated into many facets of Roman life. All major functions, both personal and political, were required to go through the augurs if that matter was of great importance. The augur's primary method of divining the omens was examining the movement of birds in the sky, primarily at night. They also took other factors into account such as the feeding habits of Mars' sacred chickens, the presence of lightning and thunder, and other peculiar events. Most importantly, an augur would guide Rome through impossible decision-making through wisdom and interpretation. These were the ways that the gods would make their will known to man. It is your job to listen, interpret, and guide mankind.

Class Features

Avian Familiarity

Starting at 2nd level, you have created a deep bond with the flying creatures of nature. When choosing a form for Wild Shape, you may choose a creature with a flying speed. Additionally, add the following spells to your spell list.

Augury Spells

Class Spells

Level

2nd Feather Fall, Sanctuary

3rd Augury, Levitate

5th Clairvoyance, Fly

7th Arcane Eye, Dimension Door

9th Dream, Legend Lore

Reading the Auspices

Starting at 6th level, when you cast the Augury spell, the breadth of knowledge you receive is far greater. The spell may now apply not only to your actions, but the actions of those in the surrounding area as wide as a city. Additionally, the time frame of these actions is now 24 hours. This allows you to determine the omens for a king whose army marches to their doom or an artisan pondering if he made a worthy investment. Additionally, the chance for random results is only a cumulative 10 percent.

Venerated Seer

Starting at 10th level, you are practiced at gaining the respect and trust of your peers as a wise sage. You may add your Wisdom modifier to any Persuasion checks made to gain an individual's trust.

Amongst the Clouds

Starting at 14th level, your mystical connection to animals in flight has allowed you greater insight and power. If you would ever fall far enough that you would take damage, the spell Feather Fall immediately activates and does not consume a spell slot. This can happen even if you are unconscious.

While examining the skies, you are able to project your senses out and see through the eyes of birds. This effect lasts for one minute. After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you take a long rest.

Druid: Circle of Sacrifice

The Celtic druids were a respected class of priests venerated for their wisdom, power, and secrecy. To this day, very little is known of their practices; and even less coming from unbiased accounts. What we do know is that the druids were keepers of complex rituals, ranging from fertility rites to macabre sacrifices. Whether the Celts used human offerings in their sacrificial rituals is up for debate. The only accounts of these acts come from Roman sources who at the time would benefit from slandering the Celts as savages. While the truth is buried in the annals of time, the mystery of the druids and their occult wisdom carries on in our legends.

Class Features

Dagda's Boon

Starting at 2nd level, when you kill a creature, you may regain a 1st level spell slot as a reaction. Once you are capable of higher-level spells, you may spend 10 minutes conducting a ritual over the corpse to upgrade the regained slot to 2nd level. You may continue the ritual and upgrade to higher level slots for every 10 minutes you spend. You may use this feature once, regaining usage after a short or long rest.

Ritual of Oak and Mistletoe

Starting at 6th level, you have developed a ritual to bring others closer to the beasts of the wild. The ancient Celts would conduct this ritual to inspire fertility and healing. Two white bulls were bound and brought to a large oak tree that bears mistletoe on the sixth day of the moon. A white robed druid would climb the tree and cut the mistletoe with a golden sickle. The bulls were then sacrificed and the mistletoe ground into a potion. Your ritual does not need to mirror this verbatim, however it must include ritual sacrifice and a natural ingredient freshly harvested and made into a potion. You may only conduct this ritual during a long rest and make enough potion for one creature to imbibe within the next 8 hours. The potion has one of the following effects of your choosing.

Bestial Brethren. You share the potion with the imbiber. Guided by your demonstration, the imbiber may use the Wild Shape ability, transforming into the same animal you do. This must be done together. For the duration of your Wild Shapes, you are both immune to poison damage and have a telepathic bond up to 100 feet.

Curse of Claw and Talon. The imbiber is cursed upon drinking this potion and suffers a horrid transformation. The imbiber is subject to the Polymorph spell and must instead make a constitution saving throw to fight the effects. Even if they succeed, they merely delay the effect and must roll again at the end of every turn. The effect lasts for one hour. You may choose the type of beast when you create the potion following the rules of the Polymorph spell.



Ritual of the Threefold Death

Starting at 10th level, you learn a ritual of death and prophecy. You can conduct this ritual at any time, even during combat. There are three conditions that must be fulfilled for the ritual to succeed. They do not need to occur simultaneously but must occur within the duration of the ritual — 10 minutes.

Wounding. The creature must be physically wounded, taking any non-magical damage.

Drowning/Poisoning. The creature must be submerged in liquid, take poison damage, or suffer the poisoned condition.

Hanging. The creature must be suspended off the ground from any part of their body.

Once all three conditions have been met, if the target is not already dead, they are rapidly approaching. The target gains vulnerability to all damage for 24 hours. Completing this offering has connected you with the divinity of nature. Any hit dice you roll until you take a long rest automatically roll the highest number. During your next long rest, you receive a dream vision from the local nature deity, acting under the rules of the Commune spell. When you finish the long rest, double the number of spell slots of the highest level you are capable of until your next long rest.

The Wicker Man

Starting at 14th level, your practice of sacrificial offering has reached unfathomable power. By crafting a monstrous effigy made of wood and living beings, you are able to summon a powerful creature to your service. This ritual takes 1 hour to complete. You must gather a number of living targets equal to the CR of the creature you are going to summon. The creature must not have a CR higher than half your level rounded down and must be a beast or elemental. Once the targets are bound together in the rough shape of the creature, you must light them on fire and finish the ritual. As the pained screams die, the summoning is complete. This creature is now permanently bound to you. It acts on its own initiative, will follow and defend you by default, and obey any commands

given to the best of its ability. If the creature dies, it is gone forever and a new ritual must be done to summon a new creature.

Fighter: Greek Hero

The myths of the Greek people are filled with gods, monsters, titans, magic, and tragedy. The players of these tales are often heroes — the mighty few mortals or demi-mortals with inexplicable power. The binding theme of the Greek hero is that they overcome. Heracles and his twelve impossible labors. Odysseus and his treacherous journey home. Perseus and the Gorgon, Medusa. Theseus and his battle with the Minotaur of Crete. Whether it be a contest of brutal strength or a battle of wits, the heroes put up a fight of legendary proportion. With some connection to the divine, it is now your turn to be entered into the annals of myth and carve out your name as a hero.

Class Features

Empowered Trophy

When you take this archetype at level 3, you are able to craft an item of magnificent power from the remains of a deadly creature you have slain. Choose a magic item from the Uncommon rarity list as a template. Your choice requires GM approval. You can only ever have one Empowered Trophy. The creature you craft the Empowered Trophy from must be of a CR at least equal to your level at the time of creation. If it leaves your possession, it loses all magical quality. Upon gaining a level, you may choose to craft a new Empowered Trophy, destroying the original in the process. At 11th level, you may craft an Empowered Trophy using a Rare item as a template.

Leviathan's Bane

Starting at 7th level, you face down impossible odds with unshakable resolve. When you are engaged with a creature whose CR is higher than your level, your attacks deal additional damage equal to your Fighter level plus your proficiency bonus.

Legend of the Earth

Starting at 10th level, you come into your own as a true hero. Your identity and renown amongst others shines brightly in folk tales and legends. Choose one of the following.

Achilles' Heel. Gain +2 AC but suffer vulnerability to all damage dealt by a critical hit.

Heracles' Rage. When you slay an enemy, you gain advantage on your next attack and add your proficiency bonus to the damage as long as the following attack takes place during the same turn. However, if your target is adjacent to other creatures, friend or foe, you must choose between all adjacent targets at random.

Odysseus' Courage. Gain immunity to the frightened condition and proficiency in Wisdom and Charisma saving throws.

Impossible Willpower

Starting at 15th level, you are able to muster the power in a single moment that can topple horrors. You can turn any attack roll into a critical hit. You may use this feature once, regaining usage after a long rest.

Living Myth

Starting at 18th level, your might has grown so glorious you have gained the favor of the gods. As an action, beseech one of the regional gods to aid you in your time of need. Describe the assistance you seek, and roll percentile dice. If you roll a number equal to or lower than your Fighter level, your deity intervenes. The DM chooses the nature of the intervention; the effect of a spell would be appropriate. If the deity intervenes, you can't use this feature again for 7 days. Otherwise, you can use it again after you finish a long rest.

Fighter: Hoplite

The hoplites of Greece were trained in the art of making fewer soldiers greatly effective against many. Implementing a phalanx formation, the hoplites would form a sturdy wall of shields and spears making them a nigh unstoppable unit. Hoplites were protected by bronze armor if they could afford it or more commonly linethorax, a combination of linen and glue. They fought primarily with doru (spear) and aspis (shield) as well as a xiphos (short sword) at their side. The ranks of the hoplites were often made up of various free peoples who could afford weapons and armor. At the time of their recruitment, most lacked formal military training and far fewer could be considered professional soldiers. It was through teamwork and great effort that a group of hoplites could topple a massively overwhelming enemy force.

Class Features

Phalanx Warrior

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you gain fundamental knowledge about phalanx formations and group combat. Whenever you have an allied creature adjacent to you, you gain advantage on all melee attack rolls. If you have two allies adjacent to you, you also grant advantage on all melee attack rolls to those allies and have advantage on all Strength and Dexterity saving throws.

Vanquisher of Armies

Starting at 7th level, your courage on the battlefield allows you to overcome insurmountable odds. If there are more hostile creatures within 60 feet of you than friendly creatures, add your Fighter level to all damage you deal. If the number of enemies is double or more than the number of allies, you may also add your proficiency bonus. This feature only applies if you are aware of the enemies and their number.

Fighting Forms

Starting at 10th level, after countless combat drills and the use of leather straps to stabilize your shield around your forearm, you can quickly adapt to the constantly changing battlefield. Once per turn you may instantly don or doff your shield as a free action and are now immune to having your shield disarmed. Additionally, the first time an enemy would move within 5 feet of you, you can use your reaction to draw your shield and xiphos (short sword) and make an attack.

Offensive Defense

Starting at 15th level, every attack you hit during a round increases your AC by 1 until the beginning of your next turn.

Wall of Death

Starting at 18th level, you have mastered formation strategy and lead your companions in perfect unison. A creature is considered in formation if they form a single chain of adjacent units. All creatures in formation gain +1 to attack and damage for every creature in the formation up to a maximum of +10. Additionally, if a creature in formation drops to 0 hit points, they instead drop to 1 hit point. This can only happen once per creature per combat.

Fighter: Legionnaire

There were none more capable of military and civic duty than the legionnaires of Rome. In exchange for 25 years of service to Rome, legionnaires were granted their own parcel of land and the wealth that came with it. This service required more than just a devotion to violence. Legionnaires were renown members of society — workers, engineers, craftsmen, and police. It was this kinship for their country that bound them all in a single goal — for the glory of Rome. As masters of war, the legionnaires most often wielded an array of weaponry most versatile for their needs. The pilum

(javelin), scutum (shield), gladius (short sword), and pugio (dagger). Praised for their effectiveness in combat, the legionnaires would be known as the premier fighting force in the world.

Class Features

Rapid Preparation

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you gain proficiency with one type of artisan's tools. Additionally, you are trained to set up a fortified encampment at a moment's notice. Given one minute to prepare, you may prepare a 100-foot wide square for combat. Choose one of the following every time you set up an encampment.



Palisades. Construct four spiked wooden palisades and place them tactically to route your enemy's movement. Palisades take up a 5-foot square. While an enemy is adjacent to a palisade, they have disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws and -1 AC due to lost mobility. If pushed into a palisade forcefully, a creature takes 1d6 damage.

Pitfall. Dig a 5-foot deep 10-foot-wide pit and cover it loosely. When a creature steps on the pit, they must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone and take 1d10 damage.

Oil Pots. Hang or tactically place two pots of oil. When the pots are dropped, broken, or stepped on, they spread as if using the spell Grease. Additionally, targets standing in the oil take an additional 2d6 damage from any source of fire.

Adaptable Violence

Starting at 7th level, your arsenal has become a core part of you giving you greater flexibility with your weaponry. You can make a thrown attack with a pilum (javelin) as a bonus action. Additionally, you can switch what weapons or items you are holding as a free action once on your turn.

Concentrated Training

Starting at 10th level, you have specialized your skills into one of the main tenets of the legionnaire. Choose one of the following.

Resolute Leader. As a bonus action, grant an ally inspiration. After you have used this ability, you cannot use it again until you take a short or long rest.

Cunning Engineer. Gain proficiency in two additional artisan's tools and two skills of your choice. Choose one skill you are proficient in and double your proficiency bonus when using that skill.

The Vanguard. Shields now grant you +3 AC. You may plant your shield into the ground and still gain the AC bonus as if you were carrying it as long as you remain within 5 feet of it.

Mind for Strategy

Starting at 15th level, your tactical prowess has reached greater heights. If spend a turn in combat without attacking, you gain advantage on all attack rolls for the next two rounds.

Legionarius Maximus

Starting at 18th level, you are a veteran of many campaigns and a grizzled warrior to be venerated. You are immune to the frightened condition. When you make a pilum thrown attack against an opponent with a shield, even if the attack misses, the pilum strikes through the shield and is stuck. The shield no longer provides an AC bonus. Additionally, as an action you can put your full force into a shield bash attempting to knock your opponent off their guard. Your target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. If they fail, they are stunned until the beginning of your next turn.

Fighter: Pankration

It is said that the great heroes Heracles and Theseus were the inventors of pankration, a form of mixed martial arts. The word pankration comes from the Greek “pan”, meaning “all” and “kratos”, meaning “strength.” Pankration was practiced competitively in the Olympic Games for hundreds of years. The signature style of pankration is to use the entire body to provide as much force and leverage to your opponent as possible. This includes standing strikes, grapples, throws, locks, and chokes. The only rules of pankration forbid gouging of the eyes and biting. Everything else, no matter how brutal, was fair game. Sheer strength was an important aspect of the sport; however, strategy and knowledge of the techniques separated the scrappers from the legends.

Class Features

Total Combat

When you take this archetype at level 3, you gain the Grappler feat. Additionally, you can roll a d4 in place of the normal damage of your unarmed

strike. This die changes as you gain Fighter levels — d6 at 5th level, d8 at 11th level, d10 at 17th level.

Additionally, when you use your action to pin your grappled target via the Grapple feat, you are no longer restrained and the target is additionally paralyzed. They can still, however, roll to escape the grapple.

Auspicious Opening

Starting at 7th level, you learn to take advantage of the slightest mistake in your enemy's form. If an enemy misses a melee attack against you, you may initiate a grapple with no roll required as a reaction.

Vertical Tactics

Starting at 10th level, your fighting form has specialized into standing or ground focused technique. Choose one of the following.

Combination Striker. Every strike you land beyond the first has a chance to rock your opponent. When you hit an opponent with an unarmed attack after you have already hit them in a turn, they must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC equal to 10 + your Strength modifier. If they fail, they are stunned until the end of their next turn. Further hits are not additive to the stun; however, they are additional chances to stun if earlier attempts failed.

Ground and Pound. When you successfully initiate a grapple, you may topple your opponent knocking them prone as a bonus action. While in this position, you may choose to take -5 to attack and +10 to damage with your unarmed strikes.

Inescapable Vice

Starting at 15th level, you have advantage on rolls to initiate and maintain a grapple. Enemies have disadvantage on rolls to escape your grapple.

Human Shield

Starting at 18th level, if you are currently grappling an opponent, all attacks that target you have disadvantage as you maneuver your victim in the way. If you are grappling two creatures at once, increase your AC by 5.

Monk: Way of Gunpowder

Centuries ago, The Cantong Qi, written by the legendary alchemist Wei Boyang documented the first formula for gunpowder. Deep in the mountains, Wei Boyang entrusted his invention to a secret society of monks, named for the very text which they study to this day. Through hundreds of years of innovation and practice, the monks of the Cantong Qi developed a martial art surrounding the potent and explosive compound. According to their teachings, the world is not ready for this power and its spread would bring about ruin. For this reason, only a select few have mastered the way of the three powders.

Class Features

Volatile Strikes

Starting at 3rd level, you learn the secret method for applying an explosive alchemical formula through martial arts. For every unarmed strike you hit against a target, you coat them with an ingredient of the formula, which dissipates after 10 minutes. As a reaction, you may spend a ki point to ignite the ingredients as long as you are within 30 feet of your target. You can have ingredients placed on multiple targets simultaneously and a single ki point will ignite them all, causing the effects of all applications and consuming the charges.

1st Application. The target is disoriented by the sparking explosion and has disadvantage on all attacks until the beginning of your next turn.

2nd Application. A bright flashing pop accompanies the explosion causing the Blinded and Deafened condition on your target until the beginning of your next turn.

3rd Application. A fiery inferno erupts on your target, dealing 3d6 fire damage. Starting at 7th level, you may add your Martial Arts die to the damage as you master the tactical placement of the ingredients.

Elixir of Fire

Starting at 6th level, you master the alchemical formula for a dangerously potent mixture that only your body can handle — the Fire Elixir. You can make one Fire Elixir during a long rest. The elixir becomes inert after 24 hours. Imbibing the Fire Elixir can have one of two effects depending on the final ingredient you mix.

Spark Powder. You gain resistance to fire damage and can take an additional bonus action on your turn for one minute.

Drake Bonedust. You enter a catatonic state indistinguishable from death for one hour. You are fully aware and conscious of your body and surroundings during this time and can wake up as a reaction. Only magic or a DC 20 Medicine check can see through your false demise. Upon waking up, your body violently expels the elixir, causing a wave of fire to burst from your mouth in a 15-foot cone. Anyone caught in the cone must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 3d6 fire damage.

Incendiary Arsenal

Starting at 11th level, you may craft a powerful weapon packed with your secret gunpowder formula. Choose one of the following each time you take a long rest.

Fire Lance. You modify a spear to have a gunpowder-filled barrel at the end. As a bonus action, you can detonate the barrel, causing a 20-foot line of flame to propel forward. Creatures caught in the blast must make a DC 15 Dexterity

saving throw or take 8d8 fire damage. Once this ability has been used, you must prepare a new Fire Lance before detonating it again.

Thunderclap Bomb. You create three Thunderclap Bombs by packing gunpowder and shrapnel into wooden spike tubes. As an action, you can throw a Thunderclap Bomb to an empty space within 30 feet where it stakes into a surface. At the beginning of your next turn or the first time a creature enters the space of the Thunderclap Bomb, it detonates. Anyone within 10 feet of the Thunderclap Bomb must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 2d8 damage and gains the Stunned condition until the end of their next turn.

Perfect Combustion

Starting at 17th level, you have perfected the formula for maximum explosive potential. You gain all of the following:

- You are no longer limited to three applications of Volatile Strikes on a single target. For each additional application above the third, increase the damage of the detonation by an additional 2d6. This effect is additive and does not have a limit.
- You have created the ultimate Elixir of Fire, combining both effects that last permanently. You can choose to enter the catatonic state or breathe fire as an action.
- The range of Fire Lance's blast increases to a 40-foot cone. You can throw Thunderclap Bombs as a bonus action. During a long rest, you can prepare three charges in the Fire Lance and nine Thunderclap Bombs.

Monk: Way of the Monkey King

Shí Hóu, Měi Hóuwáng, Sun Wukong — the Monkey King. He is known by many more names, however it is his tendency for troublemaking and unstoppable willpower that pass his story into myth. Born from a magic stone atop a mountain, touched by the energies of heaven and earth, Sun Wukong emerged a vessel of yin and yang. From that day, he drew the attention of Heaven itself. The sprawling epic sees him become king of the monkeys, steal powerful artifacts from dragons, wipe his name from the Book of Life and Death to avoid punishment in Hell, befriending animal demons, and most notably defying the Jade Emperor. In their final conflict, Sun Wukong single-handedly defeated over 100,000 celestial warriors and many deities. It wasn't until he was sealed under a mountain that the Heavens knew peace. Five hundred years later, he made a pact for his freedom to protect the monk Tang Sanzang on his journey to the West. Along their quest, the Monkey King found virtue.



Class Features

Ruyi Jingu Bang

When you choose this tradition at 3rd level, you have adopted the rapid and flexible fighting style of Sun Wukong himself. While you are wielding a quarterstaff, you may spend a ki point to increase your weapon's reach to 15 feet until the beginning of your next turn. When you make an attack with this enhanced weapon, you gain 10 feet of movement this turn. Attacks of opportunity made against you during this bonus movement are made with disadvantage.

Return to Stone

Starting at 6th level, you are able to assume the primal shape of Sun Wukong before he was the Monkey King, before he was even a monkey — when he was a rock. As a reaction, you may spend a ki point and turn your skin to stone, increasing your AC by 5 and gaining the Petrified condition. You can use this feature as a reaction to being attacked after the attack roll has been made, potentially avoiding the attack. You remain in this stone-form until the end of your next turn. If you are mid-air when you transform, you fall to the ground rapidly and deal double the amount of fall damage you would normally take to anyone you fall on, taking no fall damage yourself.

72 Earthly Transformations

Starting at 11th level, you learn the fundamentals of shape changing and body manipulation. After completing a long rest, choose one of the following abilities.

Might of the Mountains. As a bonus action, increase your Strength and Dexterity to 24 for one minute.

Agility of the Forest. As a bonus action, double your movement speed while somersaulting for one minute. Additionally, your jumping distance is tripled and you gain a climb speed equal to your base movement speed.

I am Become Monkey.

As an action, you are able to transform as if effected by the spell Polymorph. Your mental statistics, however, remain the same and you can still speak your native language. No matter what beast you transform into, you always have a monkey's tail. You can remain in this form for one minute.

After using this feature, you cannot use it again until you take a long rest.

Fruit of the Immortals

Starting at 17th level, you have learned so much along your journeys that immortality is not far from your grasp. When you drop to 0 hit points, you may roll any number of hit dice you have remaining and regain that many hit points. If you have no hit dice, you may spend all of your ki points to roll a single d8 and gain that many hit points. Once you use this feature, you cannot use it again until you take a long rest.

Paladin: Oath of Justice

In the Parthian Empire, Paladins that swear an Oath of Justice most often do so under the auspice of Marduk or Shamash, but Ishtar and Nergal certainly embody the more vindictive or outright vengeful aspects of justice as well. Often mounted and making use of a wide range of weaponry, Paladins of Justice travel great distances in search of those seeking to evade the consequences of their crimes, bringing a swift end to the enemies of their chosen deity.

Class Features

Justice Spells

Class	Spells
Level	

1st	Heroism, Shield
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3rd	Blur, Invisibility
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5th	Counterspell, Nondetection
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7th	Faithful Hound, Stoneskin
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9th	Mislead, Telepathic Bond
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Channel Divinity: Thundering Blow

Starting at 3rd level, your Divine Smite can be used with ranged and thrown attacks. When you smite a creature with a ranged or thrown attack, you can use your Channel Divinity to cause a bolt of lightning to strike through your target and onward in a 30-foot line behind them dealing half the smite's damage to all targets caught in the lightning. Creatures can make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to take half damage.

You can also use your Channel Divinity to make a rushing attack. When you strike a target with a ranged or thrown attack within your movement range, you may spend your Channel Divinity and rush forward in a supernatural blur, drawing a melee weapon and making a melee attack as a bonus action with advantage.

Aura of Exposed Weakness

Starting at 7th level, targets moving out of a 15-foot range of you provoke a special attack of opportunity. As a reaction, you may make a ranged or thrown attack against them.

Optimal Range

Starting at 15th level, you are quick on your feet to keep distance between you and your prey. When a creature moves within 15 feet of you, you may use your reaction to mirror the next 15 feet of their movement exactly. If they move toward you, you move away. You can use this feature even if you have expended all movement for the round and it does not expend future movement for the round. You can only use this feature once per round.

Volley of Death

Starting at 20th level, your presence on the battlefield is an omen of doom for your enemies. You gain the following abilities.

- When attacking creatures within 15 feet of you but not in melee range, you gain advantage on all ranged and thrown attacks against those creatures and may add your Charisma modifier to the damage.

- When you have used all of your attacks on your turn for ranged or thrown attacks and they have all hit, you may make another ranged or thrown attack at a -3 penalty. If that attack hits, you may make another attack at a cumulative -3 penalty. You may continue making attacks as long as they hit.

Paladin: Oath of Autonomy

In 167 BCE, the king of the Seleucid Empire, Antiochus IV Epiphanes had decreed all Jewish practices forbidden in Judea. Breaking the king's decree was punishable by death. Rising from under the boot of oppression, a priest of the Hebrews — Judah Maccabee, rose up in revolt against a massively superior fighting force. Judah and his brothers led a guerilla fighting force striking the Seleucids mid transit and out of position, moving through the landscape as ghosts. Judah ultimately fell in combat; however, the strength of his beliefs sparked a revolution that resulted in the freedom of his people.

Class Features

Autonomy Spells

Class Spells

Level

3rd	Expeditious Retreat, Longstrider
5th	Invisibility, Pass Without Trace
9th	Haste, Nondetection
13th	Freedom of Movement, Greater Invisibility
17th	Mislead, Passwall

Tenets of Autonomy

Freedom from Religious Oppression. The strength of your belief knows no rival. The greatest sin of all is for another to force a man into false worship.

Tactics Over Raw Strength. A sharp mind can overthrow empires. Not all wars were won by superior strength of arms. Outmaneuvering your opponent is vital to victory.

Defense of the Homeland. All living souls deserve the freedom of their home and the right to believe what they wish. Intruders of aggression, physical or ideological, will be dealt with swiftly before they know what hit them.

Channel Divinity: Lightning Hammer

You can use your channel divinity to rapidly enter the fray of combat. When initiative is rolled, as long as you are not surprised you gain advantage on your initiative roll and all attacks on your first turn of combat. If you surprise your enemies, you gain the aforementioned effects as well as an additional amount of damage on your first attack equal to your Paladin level plus your Charisma Modifier. If you are surprised, you may roll initiative normally and act in the surprise round.

Light on Your Feet

Starting at 3rd level, medium armor no longer imposes disadvantage on stealth rolls.

Additionally, you gain proficiency in either Stealth or Survival.

Aura of Rallying

Starting at 7th level, for the first round of combat, you and any friendly creatures within 15 feet during the initiative roll increase their movement speed by 10 feet and gain a bonus to melee weapon attacks equal to your proficiency bonus.

Veteran of Rebellion

Starting at 15th level, you are unable to be surprised in combat. Additionally, enemies can no longer have advantage to attack you as long as you are conscious.

Shadow of the Lord

At 20th level, you become the embodiment of sudden death. You are the one your enemies fear will ambush them in the night so they are never to be seen again. You gain all of the following:

- You can cast Pass Without Trace as a cantrip and cannot be tracked by even magical means.
- You are unable to be targeted by Divination magic.
- Once per day, when initiative is rolled you can declare sudden death. You and all your allies immediately act in a surprise round and are immune to all negative conditions for one minute.



Ranger: Divine Archer

Many pantheons count among their ranks blessed archers whose arrows soar ever straight. Rarely, one of these deities of bow and arrow grants their blessing and boon to a member of the mortal world, imbuing them with great celestial power. These Divine Archers, though few and far between, can be found scattered across all known pantheons and regions.

Class Features

Divine Authority

When making Persuasion or Intimidation checks against priests or religious figures belonging to your pantheon you may add your Wisdom modifier (minimum 1) to the check.

You may also stay, free of charge, and receive average quality amenities at any temple with room related to your Pantheon. You gain proficiency in the Religion skill.

Divine Spells

Class Spells

Level

3rd Guiding Bolt

5th Hold Person

9th Beacon of Hope

13th Locate Creature

17th Legend Lore

Blessed Arrow

Starting at 3rd level, your ranged attacks become infused with the power of your deity. Your ranged attacks deal an additional 1d4 radiant damage. Increase this to 2d4 when you reach 11th level with this class.

High Ground

Starting at 7th level, as a bonus action, you can cast Dimension Door without expending a spell slot. Once you use this feature, you may not use it again until you finish a long rest.

Gods Eye

Starting at 11th level, you gain access to the Gods Eye ability. When activated you are filled with holy light that greatly enhances your attacks. You may make an attack at 4x normal firing range, adds 6d6 radiant damage, and rolls a critical hit on an 18-20. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum 1).

Heavenly Messenger

Starting at 15th level, you may sprout heavenly wings, gaining a flying speed of 120 ft. These wings last 10 minutes, they can be dismissed at will but cannot be resummoned until you take a long rest. You gain a second use of Heavenly Messenger per long rest at level 20.

Rogue: Illyrian Pirate

A menacing predator stalks the Adriatic Sea. Lying in wait within the coves and natural hiding points of the eastern shore, the Illyrians seek vulnerable prey. Merchants and travelers of any country or creed — none are safe from a surprise boarding. At their peak, the Illyrians dominated the Balkan peninsula as Queen Teuta united Illyria under one banner. Piracy in the Adriatic was made all the more terrifying as it was publicly backed by the Queen herself. This brazen lawlessness was denounced by the Greeks and Romans leading to a bloody war.



Illyrian pirates are known to be as fierce as they are clever. They wield a specialized curved blade — the sica. Its long, curved blade with the edge on the inner curve allows the Illyrians to reach over enemy shields and strike their opponents' backs and necks. Their lembos, or ramming ships, are crewed by one hundred men, each ready to spill blood and snatch jewels. Once a target is stripped of their goods, they too are sold for whatever profit can be made in the rugged Adriatic markets.

Class Features

Voyager's Fear

Starting at 3rd level, your experience ambushing the less fortunate has given you an eye for concealment and surprise. Before a combat has broken out, you have advantage on Stealth rolls to hide. This roll applies to all of your allies as you coordinate the assault. All allies gain an additional 10 feet of movement during a surprise round.

Additionally, you gain advantage on all saving throws and skill and ability checks to control or seize control of a vehicle or mount. This applies on land and sea.

Exposing Slice

Starting at 9th level, you have mastered the art of striking an opponent in unexpected places. The curved sica allows you to reach and slice around your target's defenses. When you hit a creature with an attack, you may roll 1d4 and reduce the target's AC by the result until the end of your next turn. If the target is wielding a shield, instead roll 1d6. This ability does not stack.

Razor's Eye

Starting at 13th level, your eyes have sharpened to catch the most minute detail of treasures and the foes that carry them. You gain proficiency and expertise in the Insight and Investigation skills when you attempt to appraise value. As a bonus action, you may make a Perception check with a DC equal to the target's CR to reveal their resistances, vulnerabilities, and immunities.

Dread Captain

Starting at 17th level, travelers fear the very mention of your presence as your infamous legend grows. You are now immune to the effects of difficult terrain. You gain a climbing and swim speed equal to your walking speed. When you deal damage with Sneak Attack, all attacks made by you and your allies gain advantage until the end of your next turn.

Sorcerer: God-Blood

The gods of all cultures of the world have a tendency to fraternize with mortals. Some of these escapades result in the birth of demigod children. These demigods, if they lived through their glorious destinies to bear children, passed down the bloodline of a god. Your direct ancestor, some number of generations ago, was an actual deity worshipped by millions. The domain of this deity is categorized into four traits — Earth, Chthonic, Ocean, and Sky. Choose one of these that best represents the god you call a distant relative and begin to walk the path of greatness bound for those of the God-Blood.

Class Features

Descendent of Immortals

Starting at 1st level, depending on the divine origin of your bloodline add the following spells to your spell list. These spells are always prepared and do not count against the maximum number of spells you are capable of preparing. With the approval of your GM, you may replace a spell in this list with a spell of the same level that is more thematic for your bloodline.

Earth Spells

Class Spells

Level

1st	Animal Friendship, Entangle
3rd	Barkskin, Locate Animals or Plants
5th	Conjure Animals, Merge into Stone
7th	Conjure Minor Elementals, Stone Shape
9th	Commune with Nature, Tree Stride

Chthonic Spells

Class Spells

Level

1st	Hellish Rebuke, Inflict Wounds
3rd	Gentle Repose, Ray of Enfeeblement
5th	Animate Dead, Speak with Dead
7th	Death Ward, Phantasmal Killer
9th	Antilife Shell, Modify Memory

Ocean Spells

Class Spells

Level

1st	Create or Destroy Water, Purify Food and Drink
3rd	Calm Emotions, Rope Trick
5th	Nondetection, Sending
7th	Control Water, Black Tentacles
9th	Dream, Wall of Force

Sky Spells

Class Spells

Level

1st	Bless, Divine Favor
3rd	Aid, Moonbeam
5th	Call Lightning, Wind Wall
7th	Freedom of Movement, Guardian of Faith
9th	Contact Other Plane, Flamestrike

Additionally, having the blood of a god within you makes your destiny almost undeniable. When you make an attack roll, skill check, or saving throw, you may reroll after seeing the result. You must take the new result. Once you use this ability, you must take a long rest before you can use it again.

Territorial Advantage

Starting at 6th level, you feel most at ease when you are in your element — bloodlines of Earth surrounded by trees or wildlife, Chthonic while underground, Ocean while on or underwater, Sky while in high places. While in your element, you may add your Charisma modifier in place of a modifier using a different attribute. If the roll already uses your Charisma modifier, gain advantage.

Word of the Ancestor

Starting at 14th level, you learn the spell Commune. It is always prepared and does not count against your total of prepared spells. When you cast this spell, you are no longer limited to brief yes or no answers. Your deity ancestor is directly called upon and may choose to answer you. If they do, your mind is projected to their current whereabouts and you may speak to each other for one minute or until the god dismisses you.

Deific Avatar

Starting at 18th level, as an action, you are able to temporarily transform into the avatar of your godly ancestor. The exact form this takes depends on the specific god and their domain. When you undergo the transformation, you gain two of the following benefits.

Divine Potency. Add your Charisma modifier to all damage rolls. If you are already adding it due to another feature, add it again.

Titan's Brawn. Your size becomes Huge and you gain advantage on all Strength and Constitution skill and saving throws.

Ocean King. You gain a swim speed equal to your walking speed. When you make the transformation, you may summon 1d6 Giant Sharks (CR5) within 30 feet which obey your commands.

Sky Fury. You gain a flight speed equal to your walking speed. All enemy creatures within 100 feet of you gain vulnerability to damage from falling.

Elemental Numen. The ground within 15 feet of you becomes difficult terrain. When a creature rolls to attack you with a melee attack, you may use your reaction impose disadvantage on the roll.

The transformation lasts for one minute. Once you use this feature, you cannot use it again until you take a long rest.

Sorcerer: Oracle

The oracles of Greece are a respected few women venerated for their wisdom and prophecy. Through a series of rituals involving the inhalation of gases produced by burning herbs, the oracles enter a frenzied state where they are linked to Apollo, god of prophecy. The accuracy of the prophecy is never in question as they always seem to come true. The vague and often multi-faceted nature of the visions does, however, leave some up for interpretation. When Croesus, king of Lydia, consulted the Pythia (priestess) at Delphi for war counsel, she told him “If you cross the river, a great empire will be destroyed.” Little did he know, it was his own. The three tenets inscribed in the Temple of Apollo read: Know thyself. Nothing to excess. Surety brings ruin.

Class Features

Prophetic Haze

Starting at 1st level, you gain the guidance cantrip. This does not count against the number of sorcerer cantrips you know. At the listed levels, the following spells are added to your spell list.

Oracle Spells

Class Spells

Level

1st	Identify, Speak with Animals
3rd	Augury, Locate Object
5th	Bestow Curse, Remove Curse
7th	Arcane Eye, Divination
9th	Commune, Scrying

As an action, you can inhale the gases of various burned herbs and enter a state of mystic frenzy. While in this state, you are directly connected to the prophecies of the divine. They are hazy and confusing but give you unique insight into the events unfolding before you. You gain advantage on all skill checks and saving throws using Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma, and disadvantage on all skill checks and saving throws using Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. You remain in this state of prophetic frenzy for one minute. Once you use this feature, you cannot use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Additionally, when using the Vapors of Delphi, (See Page 253) roll a d6 instead of a d3 to determine the number of hints you are provided.

Prescient Danger

Starting at 6th level, as a reaction to a creature being attacked within 60 feet of you, you may warn them of impending doom as you see moments into their future. They immediately gain +2 AC, potentially avoiding the attack. If you are under the influence of Prophetic Haze, the target instead gains +3 AC. You can use this reaction a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining all uses after a long rest.

Sage of Futures

Starting at 14th level, you do not need material components to cast Divination spells. Targets making a saving throw to resist your Divination spells have disadvantage.

Grand Foretelling

Starting at 18th level, you are capable of ingesting a highly potent drug that heightens your connection to the prophetic divine. As soon as initiative is rolled, as long as you are not surprised you are able to discern the intent of all enemy combatants. Your GM should give you a vague idea of the action each creature is going to take this round if not interfered with by another creature. You see this is a flash of prophecy and are able to immediately take a free action to speak one short sentence of warning.

Warlock: Pact of Chaos

Clashing against the balancing precision of the universe is a spark of life and death. Chaos is surprising, unpredictable, breathing, decaying, and always changing. Neither good nor evil, the only constant of chaos is the assurance that there will be change. You have bound yourself to the ever-changing havoc. Wielding chaos as a tool requires flexibility and open-mindedness to stay attuned to the shifting flow. Lose yourself in the never-ending twists and turns and you may never find yourself again. Then again, the concept of the self may just be a pathetic excuse to rationalize the pandemonium that is life.

Class Features

Chaos Spells

Class Spells

Level

1st	Fog Cloud, Grease
2nd	Enlarge/Reduce, Gust of Wind
3rd	Sleet Storm, Stinking Cloud
4th	Compulsion, Confusion
5th	Animate Objects, Awaken

Chaotic Shuffle

Starting at 1st level, the presence of chaos judders reality from your very presence. At the start of a creature's turn, you may use your reaction to force them to reroll initiative at disadvantage. The initiative then resumes as normal and the creature takes its turn at its new initiative place. The creature can attempt to force themselves from being shunted through reality and ignore the initiative change by taking disadvantage on all rolls on their turn. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier. You regain all uses of this ability after a long rest.

Sudden Displacement

Starting at 6th level, your ability to weave the flow of chaos allows you to manipulate spacial control.

As a reaction at any time, you may force two targets to make a Charisma saving throw against your spell save DC. If they both fail, they instantly swap physical places. If a target is inanimate, yourself, or allows the swap, they do not need to roll and automatically fail the throw. The targets you swap must be of the same size category or smaller. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus and regain all uses after a long rest.

Malignancy and Entropy

Starting at 10th level, your mastery of chaos has sharpened to a specialized form. Once you have used this feature, you cannot use it again until you have taken a short or long rest. Choose one of the following.

Rampant Growth. As an action, roll any number of your hit dice. All creatures within 30 feet must roll 1d20. For those who roll 11-20, divide the number rolled on your hit dice as healing evenly. For those who roll 1-10, nothing apparently happens; although any poisons or diseases in their bodies may accelerate and they may have gained an inch of hair. Using this ability does not consume your hit dice.

Seething Decay. As an action, roll any number of your hit dice. All creatures within 30 feet must make a Charisma saving throw against your spell save DC. For those who fail, divide the number rolled on your hit dice as damage evenly. For those who succeed, nothing apparently happens; although they may have lost a few days off their lifespan. Using this ability does not consume your hit dice.

Lord of Bedlam

Starting at 14th level, chaos has been sewn into the very fabric of your existence. Your awareness that the multiverse is an endless spiral of change steels you from the changes in your experiences. You are immune to the frightened condition. Any divination magic cast on you or within 30 feet of you has a 50% chance to fail and a 50% chance to

have undesired effects. If any saving throw would have you take damage or suffer an effect when succeeding, you instead take no damage and suffer no effect.

Additionally, upon taking damage you can use your reaction to transfer the damage to another random target within 30 feet. The target can make a Charisma saving throw versus your spell save DC to take half the damage instead. You can use this feature once and regain usage after a short or long rest.

Warlock: Pact of Mummification

Through the mystical power of an Egyptian deity, you have grasped the techniques to preserve the soul beyond death and cause it to rise in servitude. Long ago, there was a powerful scribe under the pharaoh by the name of Ubaoner. His wife had lay with another man, bringing him shame and dishonor. In an act of vengeance, he crafted a wax figurine of a crocodile and brought it to life as the man bathed. It devoured him alive.

Mummification is a different magic based in complex ritual and a deep connection to the beyond. Your devotion to a god brings this power to the material world. Anubis being the god of mummification would be a fine choice. However, other deities such as Aten the sun god, worshipped by heretics, may grant power to those bound to him.

Class Features

Mummification Spells

Class	Spells
Level	
1st	False Life, Inflict Wounds
2nd	Enhance Ability, Gentle Repose
3rd	Bestow Curse, Speak with Dead
4th	Death Ward, Stoneskin
5th	Antilife Shell, Contagion

Living Effigy

Starting at 1st level, you have the ability to create momentary life from a crafted effigy. The effigy can be made of wax, mummified or petrified remains, or merely an idol. As an action, you can transform the effigy into the creature it represents. The creature springs to life and obeys one simple command to the best of its ability. At the beginning of your next turn, the creature returns to its effigy form. The creature can be of a CR no higher than half your level rounded down and no larger than Medium size. The creature gains only the AC, hit points, speed, ability scores, and saving throws of the creature the effigy is based on. To determine its abilities, when the effigy is crafted choose two features from the list.

Volatile Exit. When the creature returns to effigy form, it explodes in a torrent of goo. Creatures within 10 feet must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, they take 2d6 acid damage and have their movement reduced by half until their next turn.

Dive Tackle. The creature may lunge toward a target and attempt to knock them over. Have the creature make a contested Athletics check versus the target's choice of Athletics or Acrobatics. The creature adds your proficiency bonus to the roll. If the creature succeeds, the target is knocked prone. All-Terrain Horror. The creature gains a flying, climbing, and swimming speed equal to its walking speed.

Violent Maiming. The creature makes two melee attacks using either their Strength or Dexterity modifier plus your proficiency bonus. For damage, roll a number of d6s equal to the creature's CR, minimum of one.

Crackling Bang. The creature lets out a shriek and exudes a flashing strobe of light. All creatures within 20 feet must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be blinded and deafened. At the end of the affected creature's turn, they can make a Constitution saving throw to end the effect.

Venomous Glands. The creature shoots a spray of venomous liquid at your foes. Make a ranged attack against two adjacent targets within 30 feet using the creature's Dexterity modifier plus your proficiency bonus. If it hits, the target becomes poisoned.

After you use this feature to bring an effigy to life, you cannot use it again until you take a short or long rest. During a long rest, you can re-craft the effigy and choose a different creature and abilities.

Curse of the Mummy

Starting at 6th level, you learn the ritual for creating a mummified thrall. During a long rest, you can mummify a fresh corpse and conduct a ceremony to bring it to life under your command. The creature can be no larger than Medium size and can be of a CR no greater than your level. The mummy uses the statistics of the creature it was in life. You have no direct control over the mummy and cannot issue it commands. Its sole purpose is to remain within 10 feet of you and defend you. It remains bound to you until it drops to 0 hit points or you choose to make a new mummy. If the mummy drops to 0 hit points, you cannot use the same corpse again.

Superior Thralls

Starting at 10th level, your effigy and mummy are enhanced. The creatures can now be Large size creatures. Additionally, you can add a third ability from the list to your effigy. Add your proficiency bonus to all rolls your mummy makes.

Desert's Sting

Starting at 14th level, your mummy can exude an aura of death. A supernatural field surrounds the mummy made of a sandstorm, choking river water, scorpions, or something related to the death of the creature. The aura extends up to 30 feet and ignores those you consider allies. Those caught within the aura are considered to be in difficult terrain, cannot hide from you, and have disadvantage on all saving throws. If an enemy within the aura deals damage to you, they take damage equal to half of what they dealt to you.

Wizard: Sovereign Student

The Scholars of the three Sovereign Academies are considered the most renowned scholars in the known world. Each scholar dedicates themselves to the teachings and traditions of their particular academy. The three academies look upon one another with favor and though there is some friendly rivalry between the students, the three cooperate quite closely. Scholars and the learned come from across the world to study at the academies and it is considered a great honor to get to delve their great collections of works.

Class Features

Sovereign Academy

Starting at 2nd level, you must choose which academy you will devote yourself to. The following are the schools of magic each academy specializes in.

Fu Xi Academy. Divination, Conjuration, Illusion

Nuwa Academy. Evocation, Abjuration, Necromancy

Shennong Academy. Transmutation, Enchantment

When casting a spell of your academy's specialization, you may cast it as if you were using a spell slot one level higher. For example, this would allow you to cast a 1st level spell as if you were using a 2nd level slot. It does not give you a 2nd level slot to cast a 2nd level spell with. Once you use this feature, you cannot use it again until you take a short or long rest.

Studied Formulae

Starting at 6th level, you gain advantage on saving throws to resist the effects of spells. If a spell attack would target you and is a part of your academy specialization, the roll to hit you has disadvantage.

Specialized Tactics

Starting at 10th level, whenever you cast a spell that deals damage you may choose to deal half the damage and potentially inflict conditions based on your academy. Any creature who takes damage from the spell must make a saving throw versus your spell save DC. If they fail, they suffer the conditions according to your academy until the end of the creature's next turn. Once a creature has been affected by a condition from this ability, they cannot be affected again in the same combat.

Fu Xi Academy. Deafened and Frightened

Nuwa Academy. Blinded

Shennong Academy. Charmed and Poisoned

Sovereign's Gift

Starting at 14th level, you are able to channel your magic with effort and purpose into a more potent form. Choose one spell from your spellbook that matches your chosen academy's specialties. You may cast this spell without expending a spell slot once per day.

Spells

Awaken Location

8th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 12 hours

Range: 1000 feet

Components: V, S, M (an item of specific significance to the location)

Duration: Permanent

There are places in the world that have a life of their own and can be powerful conduits for certain energies. When you cast this spell, you cause the area within range to gain a subtle sentience. This intelligence does not manifest in a normally recognizable way and cannot be directly communicated with. It does, however, take on a will of its own and is influenced by the events that occur at that location.

Holy Ground. A place of worship and veneration that is awakened can become a conduit for goodness, hope, and divinity. Creatures of evil are shunned from these places and gods themselves may act to defend the grounds.

House of Horrors. A dark place of murder, deceit, and treachery will manifest a malignant presence. This type of locale often stretches its influence out to nearby lands and manipulates fragile souls to be caught in its web. Souls of the dead can be trapped within the area and used as marionettes for the evil presence. The only thing it desires is to fester and collect misery.

Nature's Paradise. In places where the touch of civilization has not dared to stretch, a presence can awaken that embodies self-preservation and

harmony. Forces that would upset this balance and oppose the natural order may be met with an unapologetically lethal response.

Classes: Cleric, Druid, Wizard

Brumnyr's Bubble Bind

3rd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a drop of liquid soap)

Duration: Instantaneous

When you cast this spell, a fist-sized bubble propels toward your target and attempts to envelop them. Make a ranged spell attack against a creature no greater than Large size within range. If you hit, the target is encased in a full-body bubble and suspended slightly off the ground. The creature gains the restrained condition and all attacks against them or dealt by them hit the bubble instead of the target. The bubble has an AC of 10 and hit points equal to your spellcasting ability score. It also has vulnerability to piercing damage and resistance to bludgeoning and slashing damage. The bubble takes double damage from any source outside of the bubble and half damage from the target within. Any effort to forcefully move the target in the bubble has advantage and can move double the distance. Once the bubble reaches 0 hit points, it pops and the target is released.

Classes: Bard, Sorcerer, Wizard

Daydream

4th-level illusion

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a handful of coarse sand)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

When you cast this spell, touch a target and force them to make a Wisdom saving throw versus your spell save DC. If they fail, they are thrust into a dream-like state of half-reality. Their body continues to function normally and they still sense what is physically around them. However, the illusion overlays a world of your creation. This can take the form of people being replaced with others, locations that the target has never known, or even memories from childhood. These illusions range from the delightfully quaint to nightmarish horrors.

Classes: Bard, Druid, Sorcerer, Wizard

Deadpan

1st-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

This magic dulls the senses and allows you to express information in a pure and unbiased form. While under the influence of this spell, you gain advantage on all skill checks to lie or deceive others. Magical means of determining the truth have no effect on you.

Classes: Bard, Sorcerer

Death Tempo

4th-level divination

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a piece of written music)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

In a fight to the death, the combatants are artists who dance and weave their violent craft and inspire emotion as much as any maestro. This spell aligns this dealer of death with the ethereal tempo of violence and grants them insight into where the next beat will land. Choose a target within range and they sync with the tempo. For every melee, ranged, or spell attack hit they land, they gain a +1 bonus to the subsequent attack roll to a maximum of +5. When they reach a +5 bonus, they become enraptured in the music and gain advantage on all attack rolls.

Classes: Bard, Ranger, Sorcerer, Wizard

Faceless Wanderer

1st-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (a sprig of tumbleweed)

Duration: 24 hours

While under the effects of this spell, nobody you encounter will remember your physical features once you have left their presence. Upon recollection, you will appear in their memories as someone with your vague shape and a blurred face. This spell can be seen through with truesight, detected with Detect Magic, and dispelled by Dispel Magic.

Classes: Druid, Ranger, Sorcerer

Facsimile of Form

Abjuration cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to one minute

This spell allows you to provide an emergency layer of protection in case of injury. Touch a creature or yourself when you cast this spell and grant them your protection for the duration. The next time that creature takes damage, they gain temporary hit points equal to half the damage they took. The temporary hit points are added after the initial damage is taken.

Classes: Cleric, Druid, Paladin, Wizard

False Prophecy

1st-level divination

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: 8 hours

You curse a creature with false visions of the future that feed off of their insecurities and fears. When you cast this spell, choose a target within range and force them to make a Wisdom saving throw versus your spell save DC. If they fail, the next time that they sleep during the duration of the spell they are plagued by visions that are not necessarily true at all. These visions display the target's darkest fears coming true and their secret worries coming to fruition. The nature and vividness of the visions give the target the experience that they are truly prophetic. When casting this spell using a higher level spell slot, add 8 hours to the duration for every spell slot level above the original.

Classes: Cleric, Druid, Warlock

Gravity Trap

5th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S, M (a dense chunk of platinum)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Choose a point within range to unleash a spiraling and expanding hole in space. The trap contains two sections — the eye at the center and the surrounding field. The field begins as a 5-foot sphere surrounding the eye. At the end of each of your turns, this field expands outward by five feet. If a creature is in the same space as the eye, they must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw. On a failure, they become restrained and take 4d6 force damage at the end of each of their turns. Creatures caught in the field of the trap have their movement speed slowed by 10 feet and must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw at the end of their turn. If they fail, they are pulled 5 feet directly toward the eye. If a creature would be pulled into the eye and another creature is occupying that space, they remain in place and suffer the same effects as if they were caught in the eye. A creature suffering the effects of the eye can attempt to escape by making a DC 20 Strength check as an action. If they succeed, they are no longer restrained and can move away from the eye.

Classes: Sorcerer, Wizard

Illusory Advisor

1st-level illusion

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: 10 feet

Components: V, S, M (a miniature cushion)

Duration: 1 hour

Sometimes adventurers are faced with impossible choices or simply mind-numbing loneliness. The illusory advisor was created to be a bouncing wall for ideas, fleeting thoughts, and quandaries. When you cast this spell, you or a target within range that is aware and accepts the spell willingly, visualizes an advisor who takes on a comfortable and familiar form. No one except the creature targeted by the spell can see or hear this illusory figure. The advisor is effectively an extension of your subconscious and will do its best to help you sort out whatever is troubling you or needs to be addressed. After the duration expires or when the spellcaster ends the spell, the advisor vanishes. If the spell is cast again in the future, the advisor will remember your previous conversations.

Classes: Bard, Wizard

Information Imprint

6th-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

This spell is said to have been invented by a cunning wizard who was as lazy as he was clever. When you cast this spell, you must be holding a book or any volume of text in a language you understand. The book can be no more than 500 pages and must be written in standard-sized mundane text. Once the spell is cast, all of the information within the book is transferred into your mind. For the next 8 hours, the information is vividly fresh and readily available. After this time, the memory fades as it would as if you had read the book normally.

Classes: Warlock, Wizard

Jailer of the Earth

4th-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a sticky sapling)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You summon a force of roots and earth that takes the vague shape of a humanoid. It rises in an adjacent space next to your target and attempts to grapple them. Any rolls to prevent or escape the grapple contest with your spell save DC. The roots wither and die if they take any fire damage. The roots cannot move outside of the space they arose from and can only grapple one target at a time. As a bonus action, you can attempt to have the roots grapple an adjacent target. When casting this spell using a higher level spell slot, you may summon an additional force of roots in a separate space next to a target for every spell slot level above the original.

Classes: Druid, Ranger

Lifeforce Impact

3rd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 100 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

Wondrous magics can bolster the body beyond mundane possibilities. This spell feeds off of this lifeforce and converts it into a powerful attack. When you cast this spell, all temporary hit points within range are removed from all creatures. Then, force a target within range to make a Wisdom saving throw versus your spell save DC. If they fail, they take necrotic damage equal to 3d12 + the amount of temporary hit points removed. If they succeed, they instead take half this damage.

Classes: Cleric, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

Marza's Ramping Beam

6th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You begin to charge powerful energies around your body and prepare to expel them in a violent burst. As an action, you begin to charge the beam. You gain resistance to all damage while charging and cannot be moved from your current position, even if you are mid-air. You may release the beam as a bonus action, causing a 30-foot line attack to shoot forward in any direction. A creature caught in the beam must make a Dexterity saving throw versus your spell save DC. On a failure, they take 2d6 force damage or half that damage on a successful save. At the end of every one of your turns that you continue to charge the beam, it gains 4d6 force damage and extends 5 feet further. This spell can be charged for a maximum of one minute. When you cast this spell using a higher level spell slot, increase the damage added at the end of your turns by 1d6 for every spell slot level higher than the original.

Classes: Sorcerer, Wizard

Paranoia

1st-level illusion

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: 8 hours

When you cast this spell, choose a target within range and force them to make a Charisma saving throw versus your spell save DC. If they fail, they begin to experience strange illusory experiences of people watching them for the spell's duration. While around others, they will see eyes turning to watch them and whispers of their name barely out of ear-shot. If the target has personal secrets or shame they wish to hide, these experiences may bleed into the illusions and further exacerbate their paranoia.

Classes: Bard, Sorcerer, Warlock

Phantom Banisher

7th-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S, M (a crystal mirror worth 500gp)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

This phantom from another dimension crawls into existence and attempts to drag someone back with them. When you cast this spell, select a creature within range as the target for the phantom. The phantom appears in a space adjacent to you and immediately rushes to its prey. The phantom is not a corporeal creature and has no hit points or AC. The phantom acts at the end of your turn and moves up to 40 feet toward the target. When it reaches the target, it attempts to grapple them, forcing an Athletics or Acrobatics skill check versus your spell save DC. If they fail, they are grappled and the phantom begins to drag them back to their home dimension. This forces a Charisma saving throw versus your spell save DC. If they fail, they are immediately taken to whatever dimension the phantom came from and disappear

from our reality. If they succeed, they may attempt to escape the grapple as an action. The phantom will continue to attempt to grapple and kidnap your target for the duration of the spell. If the duration ends and the phantom has not succeeded, it will simply vanish back to its realm. A creature taken to the phantom's realm remains there even after the spell has ended and must find its own way home.

Classes: Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

Possession

6th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a glob of ectoplasm)

Duration: 1 hour

This spell must be cast on a humanoid target who is either sleeping or otherwise unconscious. When you cast this spell, your body goes completely limp as your consciousness enters the target's mind. The target must make a Wisdom saving throw versus your spell save DC at disadvantage. If they fail, you suppress their consciousness for the duration and gain full control of their body. This does not give you access to spells or innate abilities the target knows unless they are involuntary and purely physical. The possession ends if the host body reaches 0 hit points or if you end the spell. When the possession ends, the target may make a Wisdom saving throw versus your spell save DC to attempt to remember vague details about what happened while you were in control. When you cast this spell using a higher level spell slot, double the duration for every spell slot level above the original.

Classes: Cleric, Wizard, Warlock

Silent Alarm

3rd-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 1000 feet

Components: S

Duration: Instantaneous

When you cast this spell, any creatures within range who consider themselves to be defenders of the territory are alerted to your presence and that there is danger around you. This can manifest as a hunch, hearing rambunctious noises, or some other form of alert. When casting this spell using a higher level spell slot, add 1000 feet to the range for every spell slot level above the original.

Classes: Bard, Cleric, Druid, Paladin, Ranger, Sorcerer, Wizard

Summon Salvager

2nd-level conjuration (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (a wooden stick)

Duration: 1 hour

You summon a Small flying creature that can carry up to 10 pounds. During the summoning, you specify one non-magical object that you would like the creature to retrieve for you. It always knows where you are and will return to you as soon as it has retrieved what you are looking for. The creature will try its best to locate what you are looking for but it is not guaranteed to do so. For example, asking it to get you a tankard in a crowded city will be far easier than in a desolate forest. The creature has an AC of 12, a speed of 30 feet, and disappears after the duration has expired or if it takes any damage.

Classes: Wizard

Tenet Brand

5th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (crushed holy incense)

Duration: 8 hours

This spell is used as punishment or insurance to those who may stray from the righteous path. Touch a target and force them to make a Wisdom saving throw versus your spell save DC. When you brand a creature with this spell, a physical mark appears in representation of the domain you worship. For the duration, if the creature acts in a manner offensive to your domain, they take 3d6 radiant damage, causing the brand to scorch and bleed. This damage can only apply once every turn. When the target takes damage from this spell, they may remake the Wisdom saving throw to remove the brand.

Classes: Cleric, Paladin

Verundo's Trick Shot

2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 600 feet

Components: V

Duration: Concentration, up to 30 seconds

In an act of dramatic extravagance, fire a ranged weapon directly into the air with no particular target. The projectile soars up into the sky and out of sight. At any point during the duration of this spell, you may use your reaction to call down the projectile and strike a target within range. Make a ranged weapon attack with advantage against the target. This attack critically hits on a roll of 18-20.

Classes: Ranger

Violent Fortification

5th-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 100 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 6 seconds.

The savage nature of combat influences the invisible energies of an area. By briefly tapping into this energy, you can convert it into its opposite. When you cast this spell, you must concentrate on it until the beginning of your next turn. Once you begin concentrating on this spell, you cannot take any bonus actions, reactions, or move. If you are interrupted and your concentration is broken, the spell fails. At the beginning of your next turn, all damage allied creatures within range have dealt during your concentration is converted to temporary hit points and distributed evenly among all allied creatures within range up to a maximum of 15 per creature.

Classes: Cleric, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

Vital Contract

7th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a written contract)

Duration: Varies

This spell creates a binding agreement between two individuals with dire consequences if broken. To prepare for casting this spell, you must first produce a written contract on any surface in a language both parties can understand. For the spell to take effect, both parties must read and fully understand the contents and intent of the contract. Any wordplay or miscommunication, intentional or not, will result in spell failure.

Once the contract is understood, the parties must then sign the document with either their name or mark. They cannot be forced or coerced into signing. Once this is complete, the spell is cast and the magic takes effect. If either party breaks the terms of the contract, the offending individual must make a DC 30 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, they immediately die and their soul is transported to a realm of tortured liars. They may only be revived by the spells True Resurrection or Wish. On a success, their body begins to wither away and they gain 1 level of exhaustion every 8 hours. The only way to stop receiving levels of exhaustion are the spells Greater Restoration or Wish.

Classes: Cleric, Warlock, Wizard

Volatile Decay

3rd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (a small vial of mimic saliva)

Duration: 1 minute

This dreadful magic corrupts your body and transforms you into a vile timebomb. When the spell is cast, your skin becomes incredibly sticky. A creature must make a Dexterity saving throw versus your spell save DC to avoid you if you attempt to stick to them. As a bonus action, you may cause the infestation within your body to explode, dealing 2d12 necrotic damage to a target you are stuck to and half that amount to creatures within 15 feet. This explosion also damages you. Creatures within 15 feet of the target can make a Dexterity saving throw versus your spell save DC and on a success take only half that damage. All damage dealt by this spell deals only half damage to temporary hit points. Once you have exploded, your body loses its stickiness and the spell ends.

Classes: Cleric, Druid, Warlock, Wizard

Feats

Adaptive Defense

You have learned to shift your fighting style to adapt against the various enemies you face. In any combat situation, you can rapidly acclimate to your opponent's technique once you have seen it.

- When an enemy attacks you, whether they hit or miss, you may use your reaction to adjust your technique. When you do this, gain a +1 bonus to your AC against attacks from creatures of that creature type. Additionally, gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls against creatures of that creature type. This benefit expires at the end of the combat and you can only adapt to one creature type at a time.
- When an enemy forces you to make a Strength or Dexterity saving throw against a spell or ability, you may use your reaction to adapt to that attack. When you do this, gain advantage on Strength or Dexterity saving throws against spells of the same school or the exact ability used against you. This benefit expires at the end of the combat and you can only adapt to one spell or ability type at a time.

Campfire Expert

Always a favorite amongst your companions, you have mastered the art of creating a perfect campfire. There are many methods and additives to this craft that you are a pioneer of. When you take a long rest and set up a campfire, choose one of the following.

- **Darkfire.** Your campfire radiates dim light for 30 feet. Outside of that zone, the light is invisible.
- **Aromatherapy.** The bolstering herbs you place in the fire nourish and enrich the senses. Anyone who sleeps within 30 feet of the fire gains +1 to their proficiency bonus until one hour after the long rest is over.
- **Wildlure.** Beasts are attracted to the scent of the fire, making hunting significantly easier. Halve any time you require to hunt and double the bounty.
- **Shadowguard.** The shadowy tendrils of the flames play tricks on the eyes. The fire's shadows can take the shape of armed guards patrolling the campgrounds. This may dissuade would-be brigands or assassins.

Combat Medic

Prerequisite: Wisdom 13+

You have learned that placing the safety of your companions above your own is of vital importance. When you take a short rest, if you choose not to spend any hit dice yourself, you may instead attempt to help a companion tend their wounds. When a single companion rolls hit dice to regain health during a short rest, make a Medicine skill check with a DC equal to 10 + the number of hit dice your companion rolls. If you succeed, all of your companion's hit dice automatically roll the highest number.

Combination Striker

Prerequisite: Monk

Through your martial arts training, you have honed a particular combination of moves that effectively puts your opponents off-guard. You may spend a ki point to empower your unarmed strikes in the following ways. By spending a single ki point, you have access to the entire combo, but must use the following abilities in sequence.

- **Spinning Kick.** Your first unarmed strike in a turn allows you to additionally move up to 5 feet without provoking opportunity attack. This movement can be used at any time during your turn.
- **Uppercut.** Your second unarmed strike in a turn forces your target to make a Dexterity saving throw versus your Ki save DC or fall prone.
- **Flame Shot.** Your third unarmed strike in a turn propels as a projectile that shoots 30 feet. It deals double your martial die in fire damage.

Crowd Pleaser

Prerequisite: Charisma 13+

Your grand presence draws eyes swiftly and holds their attention with a firm grasp.

- Increase your Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You have advantage on Persuasion and Performance skill checks to influence a crowd of 5 or more individuals.

Flesh Alchemist

You carry with you a set of glass vials and extraction tools to condense the essence of a creature into liquid form. Over the course of one minute, you may extract the essence of a fresh corpse and add it to your collection. When imbibed, you gain the resistances and vulnerabilities that the creature had for one minute. When the vial is drenched over a weapon, give the weapon a damage type that creature was capable of using for one minute. Each vial has only one usage.

Mixologist

- Increase your Wisdom, Charisma, or Intelligence score by 1, to a maximum of 20

Your knowledge of beverage combinations has made you an expert at providing for your companions during their downtime. During a long rest, you may concoct enough brew for up to 6 creatures. When a creature imbibes your brew, they are energized and refreshed. They gain advantage on the next roll they make within 8 hours.

Olympic Athlete

Prerequisite: Strength 13+

You have achieved great heights in mastering the form and function of your body.

- Increase your Strength or Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- If a spell or ability would ever increase your movement speed, increase it by an additional 5 feet. You can only gain 5 feet in a single turn.
- If a spell or ability would ever grant you advantage on an attack roll, receive an additional +1 bonus to the roll. This benefit also applies to saving throws and ability or skill checks that use your Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution modifier.

Perilous Casting

Prerequisite: The ability to cast at least one spell

You have learned a controversial technique for over-channeling your life force into the spells you cast.

- When you miss a target with a spell attack, you may choose to take unmitigable damage and reroll the attack. This damage is equal to a number of d6s equal to the spell's level or 1d6 for a cantrip. You can only reroll in this way once per turn.
- Additionally, if a target would take no damage from succeeding on a saving throw against a spell you cast, they instead take half the damage. If a creature's specific ability contradicts this feature, they instead take one quarter of the damage.



*A Gegenees
Warrior*

Stance Warrior

You have learned to position your body in various fighting stances that provide a passive bonus against your enemies. You may activate or switch stances as a bonus action. Only one stance can be active at a time.

- **Bulwark.** Gain advantage on Strength saving throws and rolls to resist being moved forcibly.
- **Reckless Abandon.** Suffer -1 on all attack rolls in exchange for +2 to all damage rolls.
- **Deft Footwork.** Gain advantage on Dexterity saving throws and +1 to opportunity attack rolls.

Takedown Specialist

Your training in close-quarters combat has given you an edge on bringing an opponent to the floor and delivering immediate violence.

- Increase your Strength or Dexterity by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You may now use the shove action as a bonus action.
- If you are adjacent to a prone target that attempts to stand up, you may use your reaction to make an opportunity attack against them.

Vaulter

Prerequisite: Strength or Dexterity 13+

You have trained extensively for the games and have greatly improved your ability to jump.

- You may add 1d10 feet to the distance of your long jumps and 1d6 feet to the height of your high jumps.
- You can stand from the prone position by spending only 5 feet of movement.
- When calculating your jumping distance, you can use either your Strength or Dexterity ability scores.
- You may move through an enemy creature's space and land on the other side of them by vaulting over them. This costs you only 5 feet of movement and cannot be used on creatures who are greater than one size category larger than you. You can vault over a creature two size categories larger than you if you are wielding a pole weapon.



CHAPTER 4

MAGIC ITEMS



Aeolus' Bag of Wind

Wondrous item, rare

During Odysseus' journey home, Aeolus gifted him a magical leather bag that contained the captured Western Wind. Using this bag, he was able to sail back to Ithaca at a steady pace.

When the bag is opened, a continuous force of wind blows in a single direction with enough force to push a ship. This force is not as strong as the spell *Gust of Wind*; however, it will blow steadily for 12 hours before needing to recharge for another 12 hours.

Ambrosia

Wondrous item, legendary

Ambrosia is the food or drink of the gods and provides immortality to those who imbibe it. When the mighty Heracles ascended to immortality, he was given ambrosia by Athena herself. When Achilles was an infant, he was anointed with ambrosia in all except his heel, giving him the one weakness that would be his demise.

Health and Long Life. Once you have taken ambrosia, you stop aging permanently.

One of the Immortals. Being immortal makes you very difficult to truly kill. You have advantage on death saving throws. Instead of requiring 3 death saving throw failures to kill you, you require 10. When you take damage while at 0 hit points, you may immediately gain 1 hit point. You can only gain health this way once before requiring a long rest.

Blood of Ichor. When you consume the ambrosia, your blood is replaced with a golden substance known as ichor. If a mortal ingests your blood, they take poison damage equal to your level and gain the poisoned condition for 1d20 days.

Amphion's Lyre

Wondrous item, instrument, rare

Amphion and Zethus were twin sons of Zeus by their mother Antiope. Their fame lies in building the walls of the great city of Thebes. Amphion, being of gentler stock, played his lyre to magically lift the stones and move them into place.

As an action, you may play the lyre and use the spell *Telekinesis*. However, you may only use this ability on objects. Once you have used this ability, you cannot use it again until you take a short or long rest.

Arcane Force Blade

Weapon (short sword), uncommon (requires attunement)

Though the blue-hued blade of this sword appears to be made of crystal from a distance, touching the blade to any object will reveal it is made of pure, raw magical energy. These are the favored weapons of the Academy Guardians.

You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. Attacks with this weapon deal force damage instead of piercing damage.



Archimedes' Heat Ray

Wondrous item, rare

Archimedes of Syracuse was a brilliant engineer and scholar. His inventions and mathematical discoveries revolutionized countless intellectual fields. One such story is told where Syracuse was under siege by the Romans by sea. Archimedes constructed a series of parabolic mirrors to reflect the rays of the sun and burn down the Roman ships sailing to invade.

With a helping of magic, these mirrors prove to be a far deadlier instrument. The mirror stands 10 feet tall and 10 feet wide and is required to be used while in direct sunlight. With magic amplifying the heat, the mirror projects a line attack 10 feet wide and 1000 feet long dealing 2d6 fire damage per turn. Double this damage against flammable objects and structures and halve this damage against living creatures.

Areadbhar

Weapon (lance), legendary (requires attunement)

The god Lugh of the Tuatha Dé Danann is a master craftsman, warrior, and king. The weapon he wields is known as Areadbhar, originally owned by the King of Persia, Pisear. His mastery of the weapon garnered him the title Lámfada, meaning “of the long hand.” This magic lance is so brimming with need for violence that it has a will of its own. While the tip is not submerged in either water or poppy seeds, it awakens in a wreath of flame and flies to engage the enemy on its own accord.

Indestructible. The lance cannot be destroyed except by the spell Disintegrate. When the spell targets the lance, the spear can make the Dexterity saving throw by rolling 1d20 + 5. If it fails, the lance is destroyed.

Furious and Unwieldy. The lance is so violently magical, you are unable to use it as a normal melee weapon. When the lance is unleashed, it will fly

around the battlefield attacking enemies at will. When the lance is released, roll initiative for it using a single d20. Areadbhar attacks by rolling 1d20 + 5. It acts on its own turn and is controlled by the GM, prioritizing attacking the nearest enemy above all else. A creature can attempt to grab the lance and hold it in place by making a DC 20 Strength check. The lance will only stop once all enemies are dead, at which point it will fall to the floor lifelessly. If anyone but its owner attempts to pick it up, it will spring to life and attack them. If it is not picked up by its owner within an hour, it will come to life again and start attacking anything living. If the owner is dead or has abandoned the lance, it can be reattuned to another who succeeds in grabbing and holding the spear for one hour, making a repeated DC 20 Strength check every ten minutes.

Flaming Tip. While the lance is unleashed, the tip becomes wreathed in flame causing the lance to deal an additional 3d6 fire damage.

Ark of the Covenant

Wondrous item, artifact

The Ark of the Covenant is the holiest relic of the Israelites. This acacia wood chest is plated with gold and carried by two gold-plated staves. Atop the Ark is a lid known as the mercy seat, where between the statues of two cherubim, Yahweh would appear and speak to Moses. Within the Ark are the two stone tablets given to Moses by Yahweh — the Ten Commandments. Additionally, according to some sources, the rod of Aaron and a



pot of manna also reside within the Ark. The Ark is kept under a veil to shield mortal eyes. The otherworldly nature of the presence of Yahweh is incomprehensible and unbearable for mortals. This is why Yahweh often acts and speaks through intermediaries as to not harm the followers. This presence, manifest within the Ark, has caused it to become extremely dangerous to be in contact with or even in the presence of without proper precaution. The only ones allowed to transport the Ark were the Levites, descendants of the Tribe of Levi.

During the Battle of Jericho, the Israelites marched around the city with the Ark as their vanguard. A retinue of priests blew shofarim (horns), and the might of Yahweh caused the city walls to crumble. After the battle at Eben-Ezar, the Philistines defeated the Israelites, killing 30,000 men and seizing the Ark. While in their possession, the Ark caused them terrible misfortune and plague. As a result, they returned it to the Israelites.

Presence of God. While in the presence of the ark and if all ritual requirements have been met according to instruction, you may receive wisdom from Yahweh similar to the effects of the spell Commune.

Vanguard of the People. While the ark is carried by a military force, they have both the blessing of the Lord and the morale to inspire victory. The mechanical advantages of this blessing are incalculable, however if victory of the wielders is a part of the plan of Yahweh, it will be so.

Unknowable Presence. At the instruction of Yahweh, none may touch the ark—it must be carried by the gold-plated staves. The price of disobedience is death. There are no exceptions to this rule and a creature who touches the ark immediately dies. If the ark is ever opened, any who look upon the ark suffer the same effect.

Aquila of the Legion

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

The Aquila is the symbol of Rome and its legions, but far more than a mere battle standard, these relics provide powerful blessings of war. Forged in the Grand Temple of Rome and blessed by the Flamens of Jupiter and Mars, each Aquila is ceremonially granted to a legion at its inception. To lose an Aquila is perhaps the greatest shame a legion can suffer. For this reason, disciplined legionaries are more inclined to face annihilation than allow one to fall into enemy hands. In the rare case that a legion is destroyed and an Aquila stolen, Rome has been known to go to extreme lengths to recover them.

Some of these artifacts have made their way into private ownership, with a few rumored to be in the hands of some of Rome's most prominent families. Recovered long after the end of their respective legions, these precious few lie in wait deep with patrician vaults for the day they will once more be used to rally Rome's soldiers against her enemies.

Courage of Mars. While carrying an Aquila of the Legion you become a beacon of morale and glory for those around you. Friendly creatures within 60 feet of you (including yourself) have advantage on the first attack they make each turn. In addition, they have advantage on resisting the effects of being frightened.

Wrath of Jupiter . The first time each turn you are struck in combat the energies of the Aquila spring forth at your attacker dealing 6d6 lightning damage. This ability has three charges and regains 1d3 charges each dawn.

Attempting to use the Aquila as a weapon causes you to immediately become unattuned to it. You may not attune to it again for seven days.



Arrow of Heracles

Ammunition, generic variant, very rare

After great hero Heracles defeated the Lernaean Hydra, he dipped his arrows in the creature's caustic blood. The poison infused into the arrows creating a weapon so insidious, being struck with one almost certainly meant instant death. In fact, Heracles himself met his demise by the very same poison.

You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this piece of magic ammunition. Once it hits a target, roll a d20. On a 1-5, the poison has subsided and the arrow is no longer magical.

Pierce of Death. If you critically hit while using the arrow, the target must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or immediately die.

Azalea's Splitting Daggers

Weapon (dagger), uncommon

These throwing daggers come in a set and are perfect for tossing at multiple targets. The bare handle and aerodynamic blade make these weapons ideal projectiles. When you make a thrown attack, you may apply the same attack roll to up to 3 total enemies within range. Roll damage once and split it evenly among the targets you hit.

Baetylus Stone

Wondrous item, rare

A baetylus stone or coin is an engraved fragment, sometimes made of meteorite, that bears the symbol of a god. It is believed that possessing one will allow communication or epiphanic experiences with the divine.

You may focus on the stone and try to communicate with the inscribed deity. As a ten-minute ritual, you may cast the spell Commune.

Barloh's Sub-Brain

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

This complex contraption is a marvellous mixture of science and the arcane. By implanting this small device behind the base of the skull, you are able to gain the benefits of having an additional brain.

Installation. To have the sub-brain installed, you must have it surgically implanted. The procedure requires the surgeon to make six DC 15 Medicine checks over the course of an hour. Every failure increases the DC by 5. If the surgeon fails three times, the patient dies as their brain is destroyed.

Extra Storage. Due to the increased memory capacity of the sub-brain, your Intelligence score increases by 2. This can increase your Intelligence above 20.

Mental Fortitude. You gain advantage on all rolls to resist the effects of the charmed, frightened, and stunned conditions.

Sensitive Circuits. The technology within this device is delicate in its complexity and can be damaged if hit just the right way. If you are damaged by a critical hit, roll 1d10. On a 1, the sub-brain is damaged and begins to malfunction. You instead receive -1d4 Intelligence and Wisdom as the sub-brain draws power from the primary brain to compensate for the damage. You must then undergo the installation process again to fix the sub-brain. This repair process only requires three successes to achieve.

Bangle of the Kush

Wondrous item, rare

This elaborate golden band bears holy symbols of the Kush people. While wearing this bracelet, when you move 30 feet in a turn, your next ranged attack this turn has advantage and deals poison damage.



Barkeep's IOU

Wondrous item, uncommon

This strange folded note was messily written in ink by an unknown bartender a long time ago. It simply reads, "IOU." When shown to a keeper of a bar or tavern, they are inclined to give you a round on the house. This is enchantment magic and if the barkeep is knowledgeable in the arcane arts, they may not appreciate being taken advantage of.

Beast-Kin Saddlecloth

Wondrous item, rare

This ornate rectangle of cloth is decorated with iconography depicting humans and beasts of the wild. By placing this cloth over the back of a non-hostile creature you are capable of riding, the creature is instantly calmed by your presence. You gain a telepathic bond with this creature up to 10 miles away, allowing you to beckon and give commands to the creature. This saddlecloth cannot be used on creatures with an Intelligence score higher than 4.

Bertrandite Sphere

Wondrous item, legendary

This crystalline orb fits perfectly in the palm of your hand. It resonates with a tingling hum that makes your fingers feel numb. As an action, you can crush the Bertrandite Sphere to unleash the powerful magic trapped within. When the sphere is crushed, time rewinds 6 seconds and you are the only one aware of this change. Once you have used the sphere in this way, it is destroyed and can never be used again.

Blindfold of the Second Order

Wondrous item, uncommon

This fine fabric drapes over the eyes and ties at the back of your head. If a creature is permanently blind, suffering the blindness condition, or lacks sight entirely, this blindfold allows them to see objects in motion. If the world around them is completely still, they will see only darkness. Anything that moves will appear as color, with different shades of color differentiating different objects.

Blood Harvest Sickles

Weapon (sickle), uncommon

This set of sickles comes in a pair. The sickles are wrapped in tightly-wound bandaging and protrude jagged edges along the inner curve of the blade. When you hit an attack with both the main-hand and off-hand sickle in one turn, the target is eviscerated taking an extra 1d8 slashing damage. At the end of every one of the target's turns, they take an additional 1d4 damage as they slowly bleed out. A creature may end this effect by using an action to make a DC 12 Medicine check or if they recover any hit points magically. Creatures unable to bleed or who lack a blood-like substance in their body are immune to this ability.

Bloodthirsty Potion

Potion, rare

This thick burgundy liquid sticks to the sides of its glass vial. There is no lid, seal, or cork to this container. As an action, you may crush the container in your hand and you take 1 piercing damage. The liquid infuses with your blood and empowers you. The next source of damage you take within one minute is completely negated and you heal for half the damage you would have taken.

Bodkin of Merciful Last Words

Weapon (dagger), rare

Simple weapon, melee weapon

This curving dagger has a hollowed-out pommel with a cylindrical opening passing through the handle. When a creature is killed with this weapon, at the next sunrise a rolled-up piece of parchment is found inside the handle. On this parchment is written the final words the deceased would have liked to have communicated to a single individual.

Bow and Quiver of Aspelta

Weapon (longbow), very rare

Aspelta was a ruler of the kingdom of Kush and renowned warrior. His bow and quiver are emblazoned with icons of serpents and plated with gold.

You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

A single arrow sits in the quiver and when reaching back for another, the arrow will always reappear. As a bonus action, you may infuse the arrow with the magical essence of the serpent's venom. When you hit a target with this venomous arrow, they must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer the poisoned condition and

take 3d6 poison damage. At the end of every one of their turns, they may remake this saving throw to end the effect. You can use this ability a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus before requiring a long rest.

Bow of Apollo

Weapon (longbow), artifact (requires attunement)

Apollo is the Olympian god of archery, prophecy, healing, and many other domains. When he was merely a child, he asked Hephaestus to craft him a bow and arrows powerful enough to slay the monster Python, which was set loose on his mother Leto by the jealous Hera. The bow is said to be made of golden light and the arrows made of silver.

You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Radiant Dawn. As an action, you can charge an arrow with the power of sunlight and shoot it into the air, illuminating the surroundings.

You may target any empty point in the air within range and cause a burst of sunlight to illuminate bright light within 100 feet and dim light within 200 feet.

This light remains hovering in place for one minute and even shines through magical darkness.



Prophetic Shot. The insight of Apollo's prophecy is indisputable and allows you to fire where your target will be before they know where they will end up. As a reaction to a creature moving 20 feet within your range, you may make an attack against them.

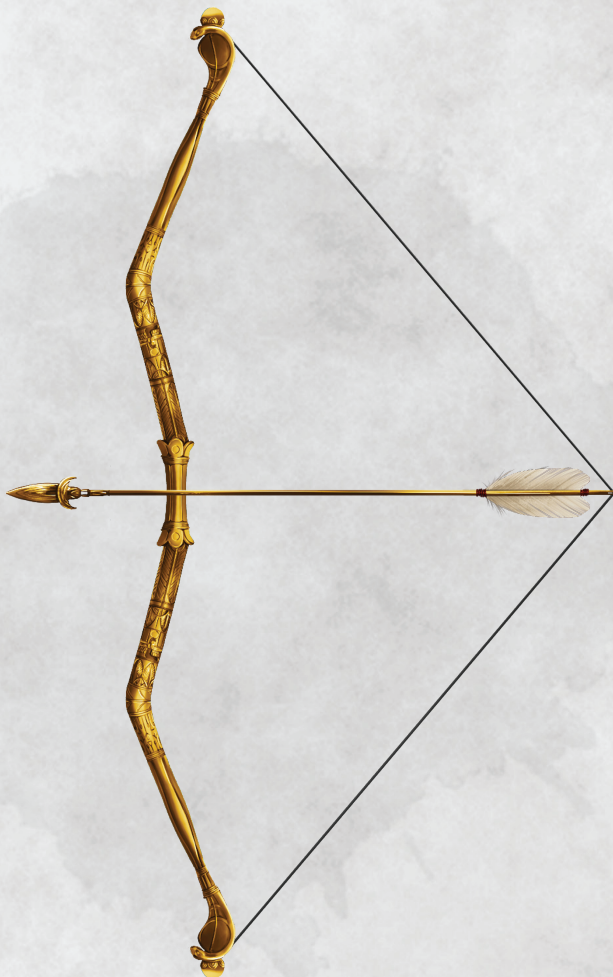
Bow of Eros

Weapon (shortbow), rare

Eros or Cupid is the god of love and sex, making his worship a common practice amongst the people. One shot from his bow was enough to cause the heart of any being to fall in love with the next person they saw.

You have a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Flirting Shot. This bow has 3 charges. When you hit an attack with it, you can expend 1 of its charges to cast the Charm Person spell from it. The bow regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.



If you expend the bow's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the usage of this ability takes a dramatic turn and the target's passion turns to rage. Instead of the Charm Person spell, the creature flies into a frenzy and ignores all else to rip you to pieces.

Bracers of the Sacred Shanty

Wondrous item, uncommon

These heavy wrought-iron bracers are wrapped with intricate salt-worn rope knots. While wearing these bracers, you have advantage on Strength skill and ability checks to push, pull, and lift as long as you are singing sea shanties as loud as you can.

Caduceus Staff

Staff, very rare (requires attunement)

This staff is identified as a rod with two coiling snakes and spreading wings. The caduceus represents all the domains of the Greek god Hermes — commerce, travel, and the passage of souls. The caduceus came to represent the astrological sign for Mercury and is used in alchemical procedures.

Just Passing Through. When you arrive in a civilized area you are not well known in, you are far less likely to draw a scene or arouse suspicion. While you are attuned to the staff, you largely go unnoticed through your travels as most eyes pass over you without a second thought. If you cause a disturbance such as committing a crime or a violent act, this magical effect is broken. You can turn this effect on and off as an action if you would prefer to be noticed or remain discreet.

Magic of the Herald. This staff carries 6 magical charges. You may expend a charge to cast the spell Sleep. You may expend two charges to cast the spell Gentle Repose. You may expend three charges to cast the spell Revivify. You do not need the material components to cast these spells. At dawn, the staff regains 1d6 charges.



You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Whenever you make an attack with this weapon, roll a single attack roll. You may apply this same attack roll to up to 2 additional targets. Roll the damage once and apply that damage to any targets you hit.

Captain Grimm's Moon Leech

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This pitch-dark creature is incredibly rare to find and lurks in shady places. When placed over a creature's eye, the leech latches on to the socket and stays put permanently. While wearing the Moon Leech over your eye, you perceive day as night. This negates any sensitivity to sunlight. Occasionally, the leech will feed on very small amounts of your blood and cause you to bleed down the side of your face. You suffer disadvantage on all ranged and thrown attacks further than 30 feet.

Cap of Thick Skulls

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This hard iron headgear is shaped like a skull and squeezes tightly to your head. While wearing this helmet, when you make an unarmed attack you may follow up with a headbutt as part of the same attack. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of their next turn. If you headbutt again before taking a short rest, you must also roll to be stunned.

Soul Traveler. By the grace of the herald of the gods himself, you may attempt to traverse the barriers of our world. You may cast the spell Plane Shift and must roll 1d100. You may conduct this magic as an action or as an 8-hour ritual. If you use an action, on 50-100 the spell has the desired effect. On a 1-49, you instead transport to a random plane not of your choosing. On a 1-10, the staff additionally shatters and is permanently destroyed. If you cast this spell as an 8-hour ritual, you arrive safely on a roll of 30-100, a random location on a roll of 1-29, and the staff is destroyed on a roll of 1. Once you have used this ability, you cannot use it again for one month.

Caladbolg

Weapon (greatsword), very rare

Caladbolg, meaning "hard cleft," is the sword of Fergus mac Róich, the former King of Ulster who was betrayed and tricked out of his throne. It is said that Caladbolg is so powerful, it can cleave the tops of multiple hills clean off. When Caladbolg is swung, the arc of a rainbow follows the blade.

Captive's Collar

Wondrous item, uncommon

This rusted black iron collar comes with a silver control bracelet used by a captor. When the wearer of the collar moves 100 feet away from the control bracelet, they are stopped by an invisible wall. Other creatures may pass through the wall without incident. The wall is immune to all damage and can't be dispelled by dispel magic. A disintegrate spell destroys the wall instantly, however. The wall also extends into the Ethereal Plane, blocking ethereal travel through the wall. The wielder of the control bracelet may use an action to increase or decrease the range of the invisible wall, up to a maximum of 1000 feet and a minimum of 10 feet.

Ceremonial Helm of Agris

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This ceremonial helmet is exquisitely designed with an iron and bronze structure layered with pure gold leaf. The design belongs to Celtic Gaul and is used primarily for ritual and status purposes, never for war. While you are wearing the Agris Helm, you may select one spell from your spell list and cast it as a ritual even if it is not a ritual spell. The spell you choose may not deal damage to any creature. Once you have done this, you cannot do it again until you finish a long rest.

Chalice of Truth

Wondrous item, uncommon

This silver goblet is etched with fine inscriptions and emblems. The cup is enchanted to fill itself with any common beverage if the following conditions are met. Two participants must hold the chalice aloft and one must tell the other a personal secret that the other does not know. If the words are truthful, the chalice fills to the brim and the participants may share the drink with no secrets among them.

Chariot of Helios

Wondrous item, legendary

Helios is the personified form of the sun and crosses through the sky every day. He is the son of the titans Hyperion and Theia. The golden chariot he rides is drawn by four flaming horses.

During the night, the chariot is simply mundane. At the dawn, the four flaming horses appear and follow the command of the one directing the chariot. Use the statistics of the creature Nightmare (CR 3) except their alignment is Neutral, they have a flying speed equal to their walking speed, their creature type is Celestial, and they understand the language Celestial. These horses never tire and the chariot can comfortably carry two riders.



Chaos Fruit

Wondrous item, legendary

This resplendent golden apple glistens in the light. The apple has no flavor, but an interior of dark, sparkling, chaos. The apple may be bitten four times, but a creature may only gain the effects of the apple once. When you bite the apple, roll a d100 and consult the chart below.

1	You die. You can only be brought back by the True Resurrection or Wish spells.
2-9	You grow ten years younger.
10-19	You grow twenty years older.
20-29	Your sex is changed.
30-39	You swap your native language for Greek. If you already speak Greek take 10d20 damage.
40-49	You may pick one spell up to level 4. You may cast this spell once per day as an action. If you are not a spellcaster, your spellcasting modifier is +4 and your spell save DC is 18.
50-59	You permanently gain 1 level.
60-69	You permanently lose 1 level.
70-79	Your maximum hit points increase by 20.
80-89	You gain one feat of your choice.
90-99	You gain +4 to one attribute of your choice. This can increase your ability score over 20.
100	You may cast the spell Wish once at a time of your choosing.

Choker of the Duelist

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This choker is worn by those who focus intently on finishing a single foe at the expense of all else. The longer you engage a single target, your vision begins to tunnel and focus on your mark. When you hit a target with a melee attack, gain the First Strike effect. Every successive hit adds the next effect additively. If you do anything on your turn besides attacking that target or moving, you lose all effects.

First Strike. Gain advantage on attacks against the target. All creatures besides the target have advantage on attacks against you.

Second Strike. Add +5 to damage rolls against the target. Your AC counts as 2 lower for all attackers except your target.

Third Strike. Your melee attacks critically hit on a roll of 18-20 against the target. You gain vulnerability to non-magical damage dealt from anyone except your target.

Cheater's Deck

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This deck of playing cards seems innocent enough at first glance, if not a bit worn. You are psychically aware of the position of every card in the deck at all times. As an action, you may swap the position of two cards in the deck. This occurs without any visible trace. Once you have swapped cards this way, you cannot do it again until the next dawn.



Circlet of Inevitable Death

Wondrous item, rare

This rusted metal circlet is etched with ancient scripture in a language unknown.

Cursed. This object is cursed with terrible death magic. When the circlet is placed upon the head of a mortal, it cannot be removed until the wearer has died or the Remove Curse spell has been cast on it. Every night that the wearer does not kill another mortal who has never killed another, the circlet tightens by 1 millimeter.

Cloak of the Centipede

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This floor-length crimson cloak bears tendrils along the edges that writhe and roil. Occasionally, while wearing the cloak you may experience an uneasy sensation that bugs are crawling on you. While wearing this cloak, you can move at full speed while prone and ignore difficult terrain while crawling. While you are prone, you gain the effects of the spell Spider Climb.

Cloud-Stepping Shoes

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

When Sun Wukong harassed the dragons for their treasures, the Black Dragon of the North, Ao Ming gifted these shoes to appease him.

As an action, you may leap directly upward into the clouds. Depending on elevation, this can take up to one minute. When you reach the clouds, you are able to walk on them and bounce between them rapidly at double your walking movement speed. When you jump down, you float harmlessly to the ground at the same speed you rose. Once you have used this ability, you cannot use it again until you take a long rest.

Coat of Many Colors

Wondrous item, rare

Jacob, patriarch of the Israelites, gifted his favored son Joseph a wondrous coat of vibrant colors. This sparked jealousy among Joseph's brothers as they believed it meant that Jacob would pass on family leadership to Joseph. This discontent festered as Joseph revealed he had received dreams of prophecy in which he saw his brothers bowing down before him. In their envy, they captured and sold Joseph into slavery and tricked Jacob into thinking Joseph was killed by a wild animal. In Egypt, Joseph used his prophetic dreams and interpretive abilities to gain the favor of the pharaoh and eventually become a governor of the region.

While wearing the coat, you may occasionally receive prophetic dreams. These dreams are often vague and require interpretation but do give a glimpse into future events. The nature and content of these dreams is at the sole discretion of your GM.

Coin of Compelling

Wondrous item, uncommon

This gold coin is said to have been first enchanted by a lonely wizard who found himself to be unbearably bored. The coin is etched with the numbers one and two on either side. You may propose a course of action to the coin with only two simple choices to make. Then, flip the coin and it will choose the result that will be more interesting. It should be noted that this may not be the most favorable result, merely the most interesting from some unknown perspective. Some say that the coin works in mysterious ways and the results are never wrong. Others say this is just a regular coin.

Coins of the Final Grudge

Wondrous item, rare

These ancient bronze coins are scarred and worn by time. They come in a matching pair and bear a living head on one side and a skull on the other. When the coins are brought together in the center of a handshake, the two individuals may speak the words “By my life or death, I agree to the terms.” They then part hands and each flip a coin. The results of the flips are as follows:

Both Heads. Both creatures live. Nothing happens. Flip again.

One Head, One Skull. The skull dies.

Both Skulls. Both die.

A creature killed by the Coins of the Final Grudge can only be brought back by Necromancy magic.

Collar of the Pack

Wondrous item, uncommon

Legends are filled with tales of gods and heroes manning vehicles led by strange animals. This leather strap can be adjusted to wrap around the neck of any Small, Medium, or Large creature. While they wear the collar, they become trained and capable of pulling a cart, carriage, or sled. This does not, however, give them the physical ability to pull more weight. They now merely have an understanding of the concept and are more inclined to agree.

Commanding Glaive

Weapon (glaive), rare

This guandao pole-weapon is elaborately designed and gives the wielder an air of status among their peers. After you hit a target with this weapon, you may use a bonus action to inspire courage in your allies or fear in your enemies. When you inspire courage, select a target ally within 60 feet

and grant them advantage on their next attack. When you instill fear, choose an enemy within 60 feet and have them make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. If they fail, they suffer disadvantage on their next attack, saving throw, or skill check. You may use this ability a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining all uses after a long rest.

Cornu of the Legion

Wondrous item, uncommon

The cornicen is a low-level officer within the Roman army and bears a spiral trumpet known as the cornu. They travel at the head of a legion and sound off commands given by the officers. They are often attached to a centurion as their assistant and receive double the pay of a standard soldier (known as a duplicary).

As an action, you may blow the cornu and grant all allies within 100 feet 10 feet of movement that they may take immediately outside of their turns. This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Once you have used this ability, you cannot use it again until the next dawn.



Daedalus Wings

Wondrous item, very rare

Daedalus, a master artisan of Athens, had finished the monumental project of constructing the Labyrinth of Crete. King Minos imprisoned him and his son Icarus within the labyrinth and even Daedalus, its creator, could not find his way out. He constructed for himself and his son pairs of magical wings made of wax and feathers that would allow them to fly out of Crete. He warned his son not to fly too low or too high, lest the seas clog the feathers or the sun melt the wax. Icarus, overjoyed with the freedom of flight, soared too high and the sun melted the wings. Flapping his arms helplessly, Icarus tumbled into the sea and drowned.

While wearing these wings, you gain a flying speed equal to your walking speed. If you remain flying below 100 feet for one minute, the wings become heavy and drag you to the ground harmlessly. If you fly above 200 feet for one minute, the wings melt and are destroyed permanently. You take double the regular falling damage when you hit the ground.



Dagda's Cauldron of Plenty

Wondrous item, legendary

This massive cauldron, also known as the Coire Ansic, belonged originally to the Dagda — the Celtic father god. Those who would eat from the cauldron will not know hunger. Once the cauldron is filled with water, as an action, you may transform the liquid into any common food. This food will never run out and continue to refill until all are satisfied and the cauldron dumped out.



Dancing Axe

Weapon (battleaxe), uncommon

Axes are often considered to be brutal weapons of destruction due to their simple construction and ease of use. The Dancing Axe is constructed in such a way that the technique to wield it requires a flowing, consistent movement. By swinging the axe in a pattern around your body, you build up the necessary momentum to deliver powerful strikes with graceful accuracy. The Dancing Axe loses the versatile property and gains the finesse property. As a free action, you may sacrifice 10 feet of your movement during your turn to begin the dance. While you are dancing, you gain +1 on attack and damage rolls with this weapon. You may move while dancing. The dance ends when you take damage or can be ended early as a free action.

Darkbomb

Wondrous item, uncommon

This glass orb fits in the palm of your hand and resonates a flickering wisp of shadow within. If you jostle the orb, it shudders violently. Upon the orb shattering, all sources of non-magical light within 100 feet are snuffed instantly. This destroys the Darkbomb and it cannot be recovered.

Dead Sea Scrolls

Wondrous item, legendary

The Dead Sea Scrolls are a collection of religious and historical documents that mark one of the most significant collections of the era. These include original Hebrew scriptures, sectarian manuscripts relating to daily life at the time, and non-canonical materials such as apocryphal works.

Angel Summoning. Within the apocryphal materials of the scrolls are a list of names of angels and fallen angels. By studying these texts, you gain insight into the servants of Yahweh. During a long rest, you may study the scrolls and make a DC 20 History check. If you succeed, a Deva (CR 10) appears. Its intentions or reaction to your summoning is entirely up to the GM. It is not bound to you and holds no requirement to agree with anything you say. There is a 10 percent chance when doing this summoning, the angel is instead of Lawful Evil alignment.

Words of Prophecy. In the Book of Enoch, he describes events that would have happened far after his time. These prophetic words are recorded in the scrolls and imbue it with the power of foresight. During a long rest, you may cast the spell Divination and do not require the material component.



Denglong Earrings

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

These earrings are stylized after traditional Chinese paper lanterns and emanate beautiful orange light. When you consume a spell slot while wearing these earrings, they glow brighter and redder in hue. After consuming three spell slots in a single day, the earrings are charged with magical energy. While charged in this way, you may gain advantage on one spell attack or one saving throw to resist a magical effect. Once you have expended the charge, the earrings fade and must be charged again.



Desborough Mirror

Wondrous item, rare

This ornate mirror is etched with swirling Celtic designs. While you hold the mirror, as a reaction, you can reflect an enemy spell targeting you back at them. The spell must be a single-target spell. Once you have used this ability, you cannot use it again until the next dawn.

Dread Chain-Hook

Wondrous item, uncommon

This coarse, metal hook is jagged and angular with carved teeth on the inner blade. As a bonus action, you may make a ranged attack against a target within 30 feet with this hook. The target must not be more than one size category larger than you. If it hits, you pull both the target and yourself together and land in adjacent spaces as close to the center as possible. You may use this ability a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus before needing a long rest.

Dual Life-Force Rings

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This set of golden rings must be worn and attuned to two different creatures. When both are attuned, the creatures enter a state of permanent realization of the other's bodily state. Combine the hit point maximum of the creatures and apply it to both. Whenever one creature takes damage, the other shares the exact damage as well, as they now share a hit point pool. This effect applies over any distance.

Dyrnwyn

Weapon (longsword), very rare (requires attunement by Good-aligned)

Dyrnwyn, or White-Hilt, is a longsword belonging to Rhydderch Hael, ruler of the Brittonic kingdom Alt Clut. It is said that only the worthy may wield the sword. Rhydderch was so kind that he would lend the sword to any who would ask, knowing it could only be used by those of a good nature. This earned him the title Rhydderch the Generous.

You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

You can use a bonus action to cause flames to erupt from the blade. These flames shed bright

light in a 40-foot radius and dim light for an additional 40 feet. While the sword is ablaze, it deals an extra 2d6 fire damage to any target it hits. The flames last until you use a bonus action to quench them or until you drop or sheathe the sword.

Earthshatter Greatclub

Weapon (greatclub), uncommon

This massive wooden club appears to be far too unwieldy to be used effectively by any normal being. To wield this weapon, you must have a Strength score of at least 19. Targets hit by this weapon are knocked away 5 feet by the sheer force of the blow. Upon missing a target, you slam the weapon into the ground creating a 5-foot square of difficult terrain adjacent to the target within your reach. If you roll a critical hit, deal normal critical hit damage to the target and also create a 15-foot square of difficult terrain emanating from the target.

Elderwood Horn

Wondrous item, very rare

This ancient horn appears to be naturally grown into the shape of a horn without any mortal craftsmanship. When blown, all non-hostile beasts with a CR lower than your level within 1 mile come rushing to your aid. For the next hour, they will treat you as one of their brood. After you have used this ability, you cannot use it again until the next dawn.

Empowered Feed

Wondrous item, uncommon

This sack of animal feed has been blessed by a local shaman and gives off a strange herbal scent. When fed to a beast used for riding or pulling weight, double its possible movement in a day. There is enough feed in this sack for one week of travel.

Eye of the Graeae

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

The Graeae are three old women who share one eye and one tooth between them. They are sisters of the Gorgons. The hero Perseus stole their eye and forced them to tell him how to kill the Gorgon Medusa.

You and up to two others may attune to this unnaturally large eye. While you are attuned to it, you can close your eyes and focus to see through the eye. For this effect to function, you can be no further than one mile away from the eye.

False Coin

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

The False Coin appears in numerous forms across the world and can be found in the guise of almost any type of coinage. If one pinches the False Coin between the thumb and index finger while muttering a prayer for wealth, ten identical golden coins will appear in the speaker's opposite hand. These coins will pass all non-magical tests to check their authenticity. This ability has one charge which restores at dawn. When the False coin recharges at dawn any previous copies will disintegrate.



Flagellant's Whip

Weapon (whip), uncommon

This nine-tailed whip is wrapped in black leather and splits into vicious, stinging ends. It is shorter than a standard whip and does not receive the reach property. The damage of this weapon is 1d6 and gains the light property. As a bonus action, you can flagellate yourself and channel the pain

into a powerful attack. This deals 1d4 slashing damage to yourself and grants your next attack advantage and adds your proficiency bonus to the damage.

Flame Guard's Glaive

Weapon (Glaive), Very Rare, (requires attunement)

This glaive is beautifully crafted and intricately detailed. Originally created for the elite Flame Guard of the Imperial Army, these powerful weapons are now highly sought after by adventurers.

You have a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

This weapon deals an additional 1d6 fire damage.

This weapon has three charges. As a bonus action, you may expend a charge to shoot a large blast of flames. These flames expand in a 15-foot cone in front of you. All creatures in the area must make DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 3d6 fire damage. The weapon recharges 1d3 charges at dawn.



Flaming Pearl

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

The dragons of China are often depicted with a pearl engulfed in flame — usually on their chin or held in a claw. This pearl symbolizes tremendous magical power, wisdom, and prosperity. For a mortal to wield a flaming pearl is nigh unimaginable.

Otherworldly Power. While attuned to the flaming pearl, your Wisdom, Intelligence, and Charisma scores are now 24.

Draconic Fortune. As an action, you may cast the spell *Wish*. Once you do this, the flaming pearl is permanently destroyed, cracking and shattering into thousands of inert pieces. Usage of the *Wish* spell cannot restore the flaming pearl.

Flute of the Depths

Wondrous item, instrument, very rare

This crusty alabaster flute smells of salt and plays an uneasy tone. The origins of the flute are unknown; however, an air of mystery and fear surrounds the eldritch instrument. As an action, you may begin a performance on the flute that conjures up the otherworldly resonance of the deep. All targets within 100 feet of you that are capable of hearing begin to cough up seawater and choke. They must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, they begin to suffocate from the salty water. When a creature is suffocating, it can survive for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum of 1 round). At the start of its next turn, it drops to 0 hit points and is dying, and it can't regain hit points or be stabilized until it can breathe again. Once you have conducted a performance, you cannot do so again until the next dawn.

Fruit of Life

Wondrous item, uncommon

Though pristine and green, this apple appears to be nothing out of the ordinary. Once bitten, the fruit flows with viscous red mana. Each swallowed bite of the apple heals the eater for 1d8 hit points. The apple may be used this way 6 times before it is fully depleted.

Fu Xi Academy Staff

Staff, weapon (quarterstaff), rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

Fu Xi Academy specializes in the mystical arts of Divination, Conjuraton, and Illusion. While wielding this staff, all spell rituals of these spell schools may be cast in half the required time. Additionally, while you are attuned to the staff and gain a spellcaster class level, you may choose a spell you are capable of casting and learning and infuse it into the staff. While the spell is infused this way, you may cast it without it counting toward your maximum spells known and without consuming a spell slot. Once you have cast the spell this way, you cannot do so again until you finish a long rest. The staff can only be infused with one spell and you can replace the spell when you gain a spellcaster level.

Gáe Bulg

Weapon (pike), very rare

Gáe Bulg means “spear of mortal pain” and it lives up to that title. Wielded by one of the greatest Celtic heroes, the demigod Cú Chulainn, Gáe Bulg is a weapon of agonizing death. It was crafted from the skeletal remains of a sea monster known as the Curruid. When a man is impaled by Gáe Bulg, the spearhead expands into thirty barbs and can only be removed from the corpse by cutting away the flesh. This technique and the martial arts necessary to use the spear were taught to Cú Chulainn by the legendary warrior-woman Scáthach.

You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Certain Death. Upon landing a critical hit, the barbs of Gáe Bulg expand dealing 10d6 slashing damage in addition to normal critical damage. The barbs then become stuck in the target and Gáe Bulg is irretrievable unless cut out of the target after their death. While the target has Gáe Bulg stuck in them, any Strength checks or saving throws you make to grapple the target have advantage. Additionally, the target bleeds for 1d6 damage at the end of every one of their turns. If the target survives, it would take a skilled surgeon with both luck and powerful healing magic to remove Gáe Bulg without eviscerating their patient.

Ganjiang

Weapon (shortsword), very rare

After King Helü of Wu had a dream prophesying his death at the hand of Gan Jiang's son, Chi, the king put a bounty on his head. Chi, motivated by vengeance for his father, wielded the sword Ganjiang and set out to kill the king. On his journey, Chi faced an assassin and was clearly outmatched. He told his tale to the assassin who was moved by his fervor. The assassin suggested Chi end his own life and in exchange the assassin would carry out his mission for him. Chi agreed and committed suicide. Bolstered by this act, the assassin took Chi's head to the king and proclaimed victory. The king was overjoyed yet uneasy at Chi's dead eyes staring at him and ordered the head to be boiled. As the king looked over the boiling cauldron, the assassin decapitated him. Understanding there would be no escape, the assassin cut his own head off. As the heads boiled and became indistinguishable from one another, the vassals decided that the three should be honored as kings and were buried together in what is known as the Tomb of Three Kings.

You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Vengeance. When you wield both Ganjiang and Moye, you gain this ability. When you roll damage with Ganjiang or Moye against an enemy who has damaged you during this combat, you may add your level to the damage you deal.

Ghergin's Flagon of Friendship

Wondrous item, uncommon

This stylized bronze vase bears the Celtic emblems of various animals. While multiple creatures share any liquid poured from this container, they begin to become more hospitable toward each other. After they have been drinking for ten minutes, their attitudes turn to friendship. This process can take longer if the parties despise each other; however, even old wounds may heal in the presence of empathy.



Girdle of Aphrodite

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

Aphrodite is the Olympian goddess of love, romance, sex, and passion. Despite being originally married to Hephaestus, god of the forge, she was unfaithful to him and had many other lovers including Ares, god of war. She garnered many lovers over time due to her irresistible beauty and charm. Aphrodite's girdle is said to be a belt or undergarment that complimented her form in such a way that none could deny her superior allure.

While wearing the girdle, you appear in the prime of natural beauty your body is capable of at all times. When others are exposed to you, whether it be over a conversation or just being in the same room, they find themselves unable to resist becoming infatuated with you. Anyone who remains within 20 feet of you for one minute must make a DC 20 Charisma saving throw or receive the charmed condition. The condition ends after they are not within sight of you for one hour.

Girdle of Buoyancy

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This gossamer sash provides a feeling of unusual weightlessness when worn. After being knocked prone, you can use your reaction to bounce off the floor into a somersault and may land 5 feet away.

Guandao of Momentum

Weapon (glaive), rare

This sturdy pole-weapon is weighted on its end to assist in following through with massive successive strikes. Using the momentum gained to continue a fluid motion allows you to deal incredible amounts of damage. As long as you use yours turns to exclusively move and attack targets, gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls for every hit you land to a maximum of +5. This effect fades as soon as you do anything on your turn that is not moving or attacking.

Hadrian's Tense Wristbands

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

These rubbery bracelets cling tightly to your wrists and assist you in detecting danger on the battlefield. When an enemy moves out of your reach and provokes an attack of opportunity, the wristbands tighten slightly — alerting you and allowing you to react faster. You may make one additional attack of opportunity even if you have already made one this turn using your reaction.



Hammer of Hephaestus

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

Hephaestus is the Olympian god of the forge, craftsmen, fire, and sculpture. His legacy as the greatest craftsman of all time is nigh undeniable as he forges the weapons, tools, and art of the divine and mortals alike. The sheer magical resonance imbued into his work is enough to bring life to lifeless objects and imbue godly power into mere metal. At a young age, his mother Hera threw him from Mount Olympus in an act of cruelty. For the rest of his immortal life, he has walked with a limp. Despite this and the occasional ire of other gods, Hephaestus is consistently one of the most useful and supportive members of the Olympian pantheon.

Essence of Magic. This craftsman's hammer can be used to create magic items. You can only create a magic item if you have seen the effects in person. The item you create does not need to resemble the original but may copy the magical effects. You require 1d4 hours to create a common item, 1d4 days for an uncommon item, 1d4 weeks for a rare item, and 1d4 months for a very rare item.

Essence Transfer. Over the course of a long rest, you may craft a non-magical item and transfer the effects of an existing magic item to the newly crafted piece. This process is risky and has a 10 percent chance of failing, destroying both items. This process does not work on cursed, legendary, or artifact items.

Summon Automaton. Once per day, you may summon an Automaton Assistant (use the statistics for Animated Armor CR 1). This man of metal and gears will assist you in the forge and does not require food or rest. The automaton is not built for violence and cannot be used for combat outside defending the forge itself.

Spontaneous Life. The mundane objects you craft can be infused with a facsimile of life. Statues you carve move in place and react to their surroundings. Tools and weapons you create may speak to their wielder or move without being touched. The possibilities of these creations are endless.



Helm of Hades

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

Forged by the Elder Cyclopes for Hades, this cap has had many mythic wearers. Hades wore it during the Titanomachy, Athena during the Trojan War, Perseus to escape the Gorgons, and Hermes during his battle with the giant Hippolytus. While wearing the helm, you are invisible to all non-humanoid creatures.



Helm of the Aquilifer

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

At the head of a Roman legion is a standard-bearer wielding the sigil of an eagle. These soldiers, known as aquilifers, are signified by the animal pelt strapped to their helmets — most commonly a wolf, bear, or lion. The eagle of Rome must never be tarnished, therefore the aquilifer's duty is to remind their legion that they must fight with ferocity to protect the eagle standard at all costs. While you are wearing the helm, all friendly creatures within 30 feet gain advantage on Dexterity and Constitution saving throws. As an action, you may inspire your allies within 60 feet and grant them temporary hit points equal to your proficiency bonus. Once you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you finish a short or long rest.



Hungry Grass

Wondrous item, uncommon

Known also as féar gortach in Irish, hungry grass is grown when faeries plant grass over a corpse who never absolved themselves of sin. It is said that walking through a patch of hungry grass causes inescapable hunger pangs.

This magic item is a bundle of hungry grass. By placing this grass in the bedding or on the person of your victim, you cause them to wake with extreme hunger. They are affected by the poisoned condition until they eat a substantial meal. Every hour, they must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the hunger pangs return and they are poisoned again. This effect lasts for 24 hours and extends if they continue to sleep with the hungry grass.

Icegrip Mantle

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

This short and near-weightless cloak emanates an aura of freezing cold around your body. It is spun with a silk-like fabric that appears white or turquoise depending on the viewing angle. While attuned to the mantle, creatures adjacent to you cannot take reactions. A creature that starts their turn adjacent to you loses 5 feet of movement. You are unaffected by these effects.

Imhullu

Weapon (quarterstaff), artifact (requires attunement) Simple weapon, melee weapon

Wielded by the god Marduk, this divine wind-fan can control the savage winds. Marduk's usage of this weapon was regaled in the Babylonian creation tale, Enuma Elish.

This wind-fan staff can be wielded as a magic quarterstaff that grants a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it.

Winds of Four and Seven. Imhullu holds 10 charges that can be used to cast the following spells.

1 Charge:	Thunderwave
2 Charges:	Gust of Wind
3 Charges:	Wind Wall
4 Charges:	Ice Storm
6 Charges:	Wind Walk
8 Charges:	Control Weather

You regain all used charges after you take a long rest.

God of the Sky. You gain a flying speed equal to your walking speed. If you already have a flying speed, increase it by 10 feet.

Ingot's Ale Spout

Wondrous item, rare

This rusty brass spigot is curved and hollow with a twistable nozzle on the top. By attaching this spout to a solid surface that contains liquid on the opposite side, you can siphon the liquid through the solid matter and out the spout. The surface can be no thicker than two inches and only non-living liquid can pass through the spout. Creatures, no matter their size or shape, cannot pass through the spout.

Ivory Qilin

Wondrous item, very rare

This carved ivory figurine is styled in the shape of a Qilin — a mystical Chinese creature that is said to appear before the birth or death of a great ruler or sage. The Qilin appears with a single horn atop its head, has a multicolored deer-shaped body, and the tail of an ox.

As a ten-minute ritual, you may place the Ivory Qilin on the ground and pray before it. A Qilin will then appear and stand before you. The Qilin are said to possess an incomprehensible level of wisdom and may share this guidance with you in a time of need. Once the figurine has been transformed in this way, it cannot be used again for a week.



Joshua's Shofar

Wondrous item, instrument, legendary

At the Battle of Jericho, Joshua of the Israelites marched around the city with an armed retinue carrying the Ark of the Covenant and blowing shofarim (ram's horn trumpets). The powerful magic of Yahweh shook the city so greatly that the blasts of the shofar crumbled the walls of Jericho.

As an action, you may cast the spell *Earthquake*. Once you have used this ability, you cannot use it again until the next dawn.

The Khepresh of Karnak

Wondrous item, artifact, (requires attunement)

Often referred to as a War Crown, this Khepresh has been worn by numerous Pharaohs and warlords over the course of Egyptian history, but most especially in the period following the fall of the Old Kingdom. As rival nomarchs clashed, this crown changed hands (and heads) over two dozen times before finally being claimed by a priest of Horus. Recognizing the temptation of the Khepresh, the priest placed a powerful curse upon the crown in hopes that future claimants would think twice before recklessly vying for power.

Cursed. This item is cursed. Wearing it curses you until you die or are targeted by a *remove curse* spell or similar magic. As long as you remain cursed, you cannot remove the Khepresh.

The Khepresh has 6 charges.

The charges may be expended in ways detailed below. When you end a long rest, you take 6d6 damage for each charge the Khepresh is missing (minimum 6d6). You may expend 1 charge to forestall this until your next long rest. For every 20 poison damage you suffer (from any source) the Khepresh regains 1 charge.

If the number of charges reaches 0, you die and the Kheprish regains all charges.

Voice of Command. While wearing the Kheprish you have advantage on all Charisma (Persuasion) and Charisma (Intimidation) checks.

Strength of Kings. Your Strength score increases by 4, as does your maximum for that score.

Protection of the Wadjet. You may spend a charge to gain temporary hit points equal to $5d6+3$

Breath of the Serpent. You may expend 2 charges to cast the spell Cloudkill at 6th level.

Destroying the Kheprish: The Kheprish can be destroyed in the same manner it was created. The crown must be brought to the temple at Karnak wherein a priest of Horus will anoint the crown with the boiling blood of a living hawk. The priest must do so willingly and cannot be otherwise coerced. If these steps are met, emerge from the temple at midday and the crown will melt away like morning frost.

Kinetic Boots

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

These well-fitting black leather boots provide excellent support and protection from dangerous falls. These boots have four magical charges. When you would take falling damage, you may choose to expend a charge and have the boots absorb all of the falling damage. This kinetic energy is stored in the boots and can be released with deadly effect. When you make an unarmed attack, you may expend a charge and unleash the stored kinetic energy within, adding that damage to the damage of your unarmed attack. The boots regain all charges at the next dawn.



Legion Veteran's Shield

Armor (shield), rare (requires attunement)

This shield has been passed down for generations by Roman soldiers, all veterans of countless campaigns. While holding this shield, you have a +1 bonus to AC. This bonus is in addition to the shield's normal bonus to AC. Additionally, while attuned to this shield you gain an additional +1 to your proficiency bonus.

Liars' Lantern

Wondrous item, very rare

Though intricate in design this lantern does not appear special at first glance, yet for centuries these items were key to the Imperial Inquisition's interrogations. Though the secret to their creation has been lost, a number of them have begun showing up in the western cities.

When lit, this lantern illuminates an area 30 feet around it. Any lies spoken within this radius cause the flame to dance and flicker as though caught in a strong wind. The subtle nature of the lantern makes it a favorite amongst the rulers of the Five Kingdoms when determining the loyalty of their subordinates.



Lorg Mór

Weapon (club), legendary

The Dagda is a father god of the Tuatha Dé Danann often associated with druids, fertility, wisdom, and masculinity. A massive bearded man, the Dagda carries a club known as Lorg Mór (literally “great club”) It is said that with one end, the Dagda can kill nine men in one blow. With the other, he can restore the dead to life.

You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Fearsome Father. When you kill a creature using this weapon, you may immediately make another attack against a creature within range. You may continue making attacks as long as each attack kills the target in one blow. You may make no more than nine total attacks with this ability.

Bringer of Life. As an action, you may touch the pommel of the club to a corpse and cast the spell Raise Dead. Once you have used this ability, you cannot use it again until you finish a long rest.

Lotus Fruit

Wondrous item, rare

On an island populated by creatures known as the Lotophagi, or lotus-eaters, a strange fruit grows. When imbibed, the lotus fruit causes a sense of pleasant calmness which over time overtakes the mind of the eater and affects their memory. This temptation was one of the trials of the hero Odysseus.

If eaten, the lotus fruit causes a full-body sense of calm and relaxation. This is a magically addicting substance. Make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, your only desire is to remain by a lotus tree and eat the fruit. You may reroll this saving throw after every long rest. If you fail this saving throw three times, you begin to lose your memories, starting with the most recent.

Maul of Gore

Weapon (maul), rare

This black-iron maul is spiked and bloodied from thousands of combats. Hefting the weight of this weapon gives you an immediate sense of the death and violence that has followed its swings. When you kill an enemy with this weapon, they explode in a mess of viscera. All hostile creatures within 30 feet must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, they gain the frightened condition. They may remake this saving throw at the end of every one of their turns to end the effect.

Minotaur's Septum Ring

Wondrous item, uncommon

This large silver ring is designed to be pierced into the septum, the cartilage between nostrils. While wearing this ring, you may cause spectral horns to appear on your head and perform a special headbutt attack.

As a bonus action, you can make a special melee attack to shove a creature, either to knock it prone, push it away from you, or flip it over your head. The target must be no more than one size larger than you and must be within your reach. Make a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (the target chooses the ability to use). If you win the contest, you either knock the target prone, push it 10 feet away from you, or flip them over your head, with them landing prone in the space directly behind you.

Mirror of Ur-Zababa

Wondrous item, very rare

This bronze mirror was crafted by Belic-tikal, chief smith of the king, Ur-Zababa of Kish. Sargon, the cup-bearer of Ur-Zababa, told the king of a dream he had in which the goddess Ishtar came to Ur-Zababa and killed him. Frightened by this omen, Ur-Zababa ordered Sargon to deliver a message to Belic-tikal where a cunning trap had been laid. Sargon was warned by the goddess Ishtar and instead lured Ur-Zababa to the temple forge. There, he pushed the king into the face of the mirror and Ur-Zababa fell through, becoming trapped in a dimension of reflections forever.

When a creature is forcefully pushed into the mirror, they must make a DC 20 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, they fall through the mirror and are transported to a dimension of reflections. The world exists there in a static state and no other mortals naturally reside there. Anyone trapped within can communicate freely with those outside it. If the mirror is destroyed, the dimension within vanishes and all within perish. Only one creature can reside within the mirror at a time. If another is forced in, they are unable to cross the threshold. The creature within can be released through magic that allows transit across planes.



Milton's Shadow-Bolt Crossbow

Weapon (heavy crossbow), rare

This ancient weapon is crafted from a strange, dark wood that has a purple hue in the right light. Upon first glance, this crossbow appears unfinished, as it is missing the string. When the trigger is pulled, a string and bolt made of condensed shadows appear on the weapon and fire. The damage this weapon deals is necrotic damage.

You have a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

This weapon loses the loading and ammunition properties.

Moly

Wondrous item, rare

During the Odyssey, Hermes gifted Odysseus a magical flower to protect him from the enchantress Circe. The herb is quite beautiful with a white bloom and black stem; however, for a mortal to pick a moly is inviting danger. Only a god in their immortality can bear to pick a moly.

Black Harvest. Picking the moly flower has a dangerous outcome. When you touch a living and growing moly, make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, a black magical secretion enters your body and begins to fester within you. You gain the poisoned condition and the disease Flesh Rot, causing your flesh to decay and giving you disadvantage on Charisma checks and vulnerability to all damage. These effects must be treated by magic or will never be cured.

Anti-Magic Herb. While the moly is on your person, you gain advantage on saving throws against spells. The first time you would be affected by a harmful single-target spell, the spell fizzles out as if effected by the spell Counterspell. When this happens, the moly wilts and turns to dust losing all magical properties.

Moye

Weapon (shortsword), very rare

King Helü of Wu ordered the swordsmith couple Gan Jiang and Mo Ye to craft a pair of swords in three months. They found the furnace to be lacking human qi and utilized their own hair and nails as well as the breath of 300 children to blow the bellows. After three years, the swords were finally completed and named Ganjiang and Moye after their creators. They were perfectly in balance — a male and female sword. Gan Jiang decided to keep the male sword and bequeathed the female sword to the king. Displeased by the length of time he had waited, the king had Gan Jiang executed.

You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Honor. When you wield both Ganjiang and Moye, you gain this ability. As long as you wield Ganjiang and Moye together, your attacks have advantage. If your attack would already have advantage, instead double your proficiency bonus for the attack.

Mustache Caterpillar

Wondrous item, common

This hairy insect is roughly two inches long and very friendly. If placed on your upper lip, it will nuzzle into your face and comfortably fall asleep. It survives by absorbing your sweat. While wearing the Mustache Caterpillar, no one who has seen you without the Mustache Caterpillar will recognize you unless you bring it to their attention.

Nebu

Wondrous item, legendary

Said to be the very flesh of the Egyptian gods, Nebu is a nearly indestructible golden metal. If made into armor, increase the AC provided by the armor by 2. Nebu is so valuable that many would kill for it without a second thought and kings would hoard it as a symbol of status.

Necklace of Harmonia

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

When Aphrodite betrayed her husband Hephaestus and slept with the god Ares, Hephaestus was overwhelmed with rage. In his fury, he went to his forge and crafted a cursed object so malignant that it would bring misfortune and death to its bearer. It took the shape of two serpents with their open fangs forming a clasp, wrapped in gold and jewels. He then bequeathed this necklace to Aphrodite's daughter, Harmonia. Luck turned on Harmonia as she was transformed into a snake. After her transfiguration, the necklace passed to her daughter Selene, who on the day of her inheritance was killed by Hera. Later, the necklace fell into the hands of Queen Jocasta, mother of Oedipus. After her mistaken affair with her son, she killed herself and Oedipus tore out his own eyes. The necklace would continue to be inherited by others drawn by its allure and leave a wake of chaos behind.

Forever Radiant. While wearing the necklace, you appear in the prime of your youth and the most beautiful you could possibly be. This is, however, an illusion even to yourself. You still age normally.

Curse of Misfortune. The Necklace of Harmonia was cursed by Hephaestus when he crafted it in a jealous rage. The wearer is subject to all manner of bad luck, causing all attacks, spells, and abilities used against them to have advantage. The wearer is magically unaware that the necklace could

cause this misfortune and will become violently resistant to the implication that the necklace is anything less than a holy relic. Due to its creation by Hephaestus, greatest of all craftsmen, this curse cannot be undone by any means.

Necklace of Separation

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This hardy copper necklace is set with a flat and round blue gem that hums if you put your ear up to it. When you are grappling a creature, as a bonus action you may activate the necklace causing a wave of force to blast outward, separating you and the target and causing them to be thrown. The target lands 30 feet away and must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or land prone. Once you have used this ability, you cannot use it again until the next dawn.

Nemean Lion Hide

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

The first labor of the hero Heracles was to kill the Nemean Lion.

Its golden fur was impenetrable and the ferocity of the beast was unmatched.

Heracles triumphed over the monster by stunning it with his club and wrestling it until it was strangled. At the suggestion of Athena, Heracles skinned the lion with its own claw and wore the pelt as armor.



Impenetrable Pelt. While wearing this hide and no other armor, you gain immunity to non-magical damage. You may use this with Unarmored Defense features.

Norigae of Protection

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

Norigae is a traditional Korean charm that is dangled from a skirt or other clothing. It is said to bring fortune, youth, and happiness to the owner. These norigae come in four variants representing different aspects of nature. The protections these charms provide are as follows.

Sun Charm. Whenever you take fire damage, add 1d6 fire damage to the next damage roll you make.

Lake Charm. Whenever you take poison damage, gain a point of inspiration. You can only have one inspiration in this way at a time and it must be used within one hour.

Sky Charm. You only take half damage from falling.

Spirit Charm. As an action, you can gain true sight for 6 seconds. Once you have used this ability, you cannot use it again until the next dawn.



Nuwa Academy Staff

Staff, weapon (quarterstaff), rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

Nuwa Academy specializes in the powerful magic of Evocation, Abjuration, and Necromancy. While wielding this staff, all spell rituals of these spell schools may be cast in half the required time. Additionally, while you are attuned to the staff and gain a spellcaster class level, you may choose a spell you are capable of casting and learning and infuse it into the staff. While the spell is infused this way, you may cast it without it counting toward your maximum spells known and without consuming a spell slot. Once you have cast the spell this way, you cannot do so again until you finish a long rest. The staff can only be infused with one spell and you can replace the spell when you gain a spellcaster level.



Orna

Weapon (longsword), very rare (requires attunement)

Orna is the sword of Tethra of the Fomorians, ruler of Mag Mell. After his defeat in the Second Battle of Mag Tuiredh, Orna was taken by Ogma, a god of the Tuatha Dé Danann. When Orna is drawn from its sheath, it speaks loudly the deeds of its wielder.

You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Glorious Deeds. When Orna is drawn from its sheath, it speaks in a booming voice that can be heard clearly 100 feet away. The voice recounts the most heroic deeds the wielder has accomplished in their life in order of significance, stopping after 30 seconds.

Parazonium

Weapon (dagger), uncommon

A parazonium is a long dagger often depicted being wielded by a god or the emperor. Its wide triangular tip gives the knife a unique shape and identifiable iconography. Those within the presence of the parazonium feel a sense of courage wash over them in the face of despair.

While the dagger is on your person and within sight, you and all allies within 10 feet of you gain advantage on Wisdom saving throws. Additionally, if you or an ally would gain the frightened condition, immediately end the condition at the end of that creature's turn.

Pendant of Common Sense

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This curious pendant dangles from a silver chain and houses a faint glowing light within. The light is actually what remains of an intelligent sentience that has been bound to the necklace. It is incapable of communicating through mundane or magical means. However, this sentience is

always observing and listening. If you undergo a foolish act or anything that would go against common sense, the pendant vibrates and quietly hums in disapproval. Additionally, if the pendant notices something obviously important to you that you simply overlooked, it will grow rapidly hot and sting your skin in frustration.

PHEME'S TRUMPET

Wondrous item, instrument, rare

PHEME is the personified form of fame and rumor. She is the daughter of Gaia and spreads gossip about both gods and mortals. This comes in a positive light when notable deeds are spread, but can prove troublesome when scandals are whispered. She is seen carrying a trumpet which blasts out these rumors to the public.

While carrying PHEME's trumpet, as an action you can speak a short sentence aloud, then blow the trumpet. All within earshot of the trumpet's blast are magically aware of the information you spoke. Whether they believe it to be true is up to them. Once you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you finish a long rest.

Phoenix Coronet

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

This ornate Chinese headdress is stylized after the mythical phoenix. This style is often worn by noblewomen or brides. While wearing this headdress, you take on some of the aspects of the fiery bird itself. You gain advantage on death saving throws and resistance to fire damage. If you ever die while wearing the coronet, your body turns to ashes. After seven days, you rise from the ashes completely restored as if you were affected by the spell *Raise Dead*. Once you have returned this way, the coronet is destroyed permanently.



Primordial Goo

Wondrous item, rare

This sticky, translucent ichor contains otherworldly magical properties that can change the material nature of objects. When you bathe a weapon in this goo for 8 hours, you can change the damage type of the weapon permanently. During this bathing ritual, you must deal any amount of the desired damage type to the goo so it may replicate the damage. Once you have undergone this process, the goo becomes inert and cannot be used again.

Radiate Crown

Wondrous item, rare

A radiate or solar crown is often associated with veneration of the sun. In Egypt, the crown takes the shape of a disc surrounded by two horns. Gods and pharaohs alike are depicted wearing a radiate crown. In Rome, emperors associated with the *Sol Invictus* cult can be seen wearing one of these crowns.

While wearing this crown, you can use an action to cast the *Daylight* spell with it. The light radiated from this spell counts as actual sunlight. The crown can't be used this way again until the next dawn.

Rallying Standard

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

A waving banner portraying the heraldry of home can bolster wavering courage. This battle standard has been infused with courageous magic and musters the willpower to fight ferociously. When an allied creature starts its turn in a space adjacent to you, it may make a single melee attack as a bonus action during their turn. This is separate from any attacks that they make during their turn. For you to grant this ability, you must wield the standard either in one hand or strapped to your back.

Raindrop Earrings

Wondrous item, common

These beautifully aesthetic earrings are made of magically bound water. Forming the shape of large raindrops, these earrings shimmer and flow below your ears and set you apart from the common crowd.

Reevas' Messenger's Fruit

Wondrous item, uncommon

You may whisper a message of up to thirty seconds in length into this red apple and designate a single target. When the apple is held by the designated target it will morph one side into a humanoid face and relay the message once before screaming and withering away. If bitten, one side of the apple will morph into a humanoid face, scream loudly, and wither away. Any creature that takes a bite from the apple must make a DC 15 constitution saving throw. On a failure, they vomit heavily for the next 10 minutes.

Ring of the Long March

Wondrous item, uncommon

Bearing the sigil of a Roman soldier, this rustic ring fits comfortably on your hand as if it was always there. While wearing the ring, you will never tire from travel and gain the benefits of travelling at a slow pace while at a normal pace and the benefits of travelling at a normal pace while at a fast pace. Additionally, once per week during a long rest you can spend the entire time on watch duty without suffering the effects of sleep deprivation.

Ring of the Aristocrat

Wondrous item, rare

This gold signet ring bears a unique sigil recognizable to all within the upper echelon of civilization. Whenever you present this ring to a noble, high-born, or wealthy family, they are inclined to provide you the utmost courtesy. This includes housing and feeding you as long as you remain a humble guest. This is a magical effect and the noble house that sigil belongs to may not actually exist or may be simply misattributed by the viewer.



Ring of Unexpected Might

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This miniscule bronze ring will only fit on the hand of a small sized creature. While wearing the ring, you do not suffer disadvantage when wielding weapons with the heavy property. Additionally, while wielding a two-handed weapon, gain a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls.

Rod of Asclepius

Staff, rare (requires attunement)

Asclepius, son of Apollo, is the Greek god of healing and medicine. His rod represents the rejuvenating aspect of medicine and is seen as a single serpent coiling around a rod. This is often confused with the Caduceus Staff, a symbol of the god Hermes, as the two share similar iconography — the Caduceus Staff displays an additional snake and wings. The serpent symbolically can represent rebirth through the shedding of its skin or the dual nature of physicians as agents of life and death.



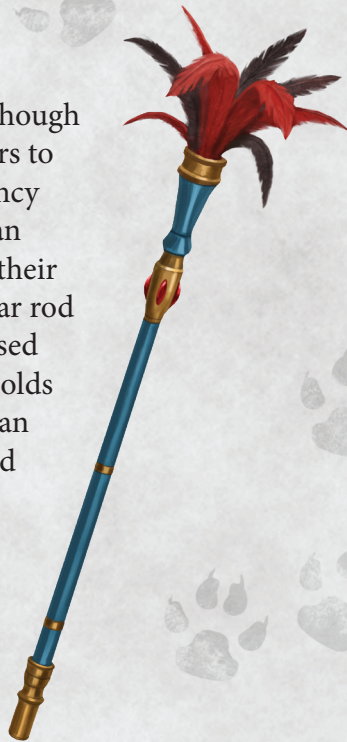
Hippocratic Oath. At the end of a combat, if you have not dealt any damage during the entire combat, your next roll to heal damage automatically rolls the highest possible number on every die. This benefit must be used within one hour of the combat.

Physician. While not in combat, you gain advantage on Medicine skill checks.

Rod of Bastet

Wondrous item, very rare

At first glance, this item, though beautifully detailed, appears to be nothing more than a fancy cat toy used by the Egyptian nobles when playing with their companions. This particular rod has a secret, however. Blessed by the Goddess Bastet, it holds the power to enthrall human beings and other humanoid creatures.



Sandals of Immediate Response

Wondrous item, uncommon

While wearing these worn-in sandals, your ability to rapidly deploy into combat is heightened. Whenever initiative is rolled, as long as you are not surprised, you are able to immediately move 10 feet, even if it is not yet your turn.

Satyr's Cup of Debauchery

Wondrous item, uncommon

The satyr is a creature of excess and depravity that worships the god Dionysus. This goblet was crafted and cursed by a wicked satyr who wished to play jokes on all who were fool enough to drink from it. The cup displays imagery of men and women making merry and drinking to their heart's content. Any liquid poured into this cup immediately becomes alcoholic and is very potent despite retaining its original flavor. The intoxication that follows is unnaturally raucous, providing energy and zest for troublemaking.



Rod of Arcane Feedback

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This mirror-finished metal pole is worn on the back and stands upright a full two feet above the wielder's head. When a creature within 60 feet of you casts a spell, you may use your reaction to create a feedback loop of arcane resonance and damage the caster. The caster must make a saving throw against their own spell save DC. If they fail, they roll a number of d6s equal to the spell's level and take that much psychic damage. If they succeed, they take half that damage. If the spell they cast deals damage, the damage type of the feedback changes to that damage type. Once you have used this ability, you cannot use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

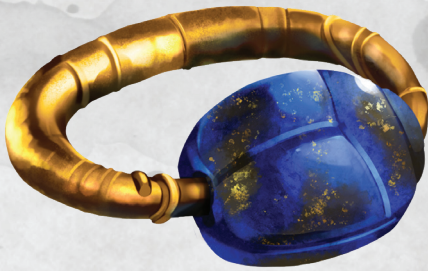
Select a humanoid target within 5 feet. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be enthralled, for 1 hour. While enthralled the target reacts as though under the effects of the Charm Person spell with the addition of a compulsion to bat at and chase the Rod of Bastet's feathers. The Rod of Bastet has a maximum of three charges and regains 1D3 charges at dawn.

Scarab Ring

Wondrous item, rare

This engraved, golden ring is set with a large blue gem cut in the shape of a scarab. The scarab beetle is an extremely common symbol of renewal and change and is associated with the god Khepri, the rising sun.

As an action, you may unleash the power of the ring and summon two Swarms of Beetles (CR ½). They enter the initiative directly after your turn and are controlled by you. The scarabs last for one minute or until they reach 0 hit points at which point, they turn to sand and blow away. Once you have used this ability, you cannot use it again until the next dawn



Seal of Solomon

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

The Seal of Solomon is a ring bearing a hexagram pattern given to King Solomon of Israel by Yahweh. The power in this ring is said to hold sway over demons, spirits, and beasts.

Summon Djinni. While wearing the ring, as a ten-minute ritual you can summon a Djinni (CR 11). This Djinni is loyal to you and lasts one hour before disappearing to the plane it came from. If the Djinni falls to 0 hit points, it returns to its original plane.

Master of Demons. You have advantage on all attacks, ability checks, and saving throws against fiends.

Serpent's Armbands

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

While wearing these coiling, golden bracers, the fighting style and aspect of the snake allows you wider influence of the battlefield. When you make an unarmed attack, the coils of the serpents extend and strike out at your opponent. Your unarmed attacks gain the reach property. The damage type of your unarmed attacks becomes poison damage.



Sharur

Weapon (mace), artifact (requires attunement)

Sharur, translated to “smasher of thousands,” is a mace wielded by the Sumerian god Ninurta. Ninurta put Sharur to use when he killed Asag the demon and Kur the primeval serpent. Sharur is a sentient weapon that treats its owner as a king or queen.

You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Floating Force. As a bonus action, you may cause Sharur to float out of your hand and attack an enemy within 20 feet. For the next minute, you may make attacks at this range. Once you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you take a long rest.

Roaring Transformation. As a bonus action, you may command Sharur to transform into a Chimera (CR 6). This transformation lasts for one minute or until Sharur drops to 0 hit points. Once you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you take a long rest.

Loyal Scout. During a long rest, you may command Sharur to float into the sky and patrol the area within a 1-mile radius. At the end of your long rest, Sharur will return and report its findings to you telepathically.

Shennong Academy Staff

Staff, weapon (quarterstaff), rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

Shennong Academy specializes in the wondrous arcane schools of Transmutation and Enchantment. While wielding this staff, all spell rituals of these spell schools may be cast in half the required time. Additionally, while you are attuned to the staff and gain a spellcaster class level, you may choose a spell you are capable of casting and learning and infuse it into the staff. While the spell is infused this way, you may cast it without it counting toward your maximum spells known and without consuming a spell slot. Once you have cast the spell this way, you cannot do so again until you finish a long rest. The staff can only be infused with one spell and you can replace the spell when you gain a spellcaster level.

Shirt of Nessus

Wondrous item, legendary

Heracles and his wife Deianeira ventured to cross a river and were offered help by the centaur, Nessus. After assisting Deianeira across, leaving Heracles on the other side, Nessus attempted to force himself on Deianeira. With quick aim, Heracles shot Nessus with an arrow dipped in the poisonous blood of the Lernaean Hydra. As Nessus died, he feigned regret and implored Deianeira to take his shirt as a magic

token to keep her husband faithful. Deianeira naively agreed. Years later, when Heracles grew fond of another woman, Ino, Deianeira gifted Heracles the shirt. As soon as he put it on, he was overwhelmed with unbearable pain. This suffering was so unbearable that Heracles built his own funeral pyre and ended his mortal life. Thus passed Heracles into godhood.

Agonizing Decay. While wearing the shirt, you suffer constant horrible pain. You are unable to gain the benefit of a short or long rest and immediately gain a level of exhaustion. Every sunrise, you gain another level of exhaustion.

Removing the Shirt. Once the shirt has been put on, it cannot be removed or destroyed by normal means. To end the suffering and remove the shirt, the spell Greater Restoration must be cast as many times as necessary to remove all levels of exhaustion gained. Once all levels of exhaustion have been removed, the pain subsides and the shirt may be removed.



Silphium

Wondrous item, uncommon

Said to be a gift from Apollo to humanity, Silphium is a miraculous herb that grows on the coastal regions of the Mediterranean. Silphium has extraordinary healing powers that make it a crucially valuable object of trade throughout Greece, Rome, and Egypt.

Apollo's Health. During a long rest, you may apply a poultice made of Silphium to cure any poison or disease. Until you take your next long rest, any hit dice spent on a short rest will roll the maximum number.

Aphrodisiac. Silphium has many useful qualities including use as a perfume or aphrodisiac. After you have used Silphium during a long rest, until your next long rest you gain advantage on Charisma skill and ability checks.

Slippery Armor

Generic Variant, uncommon

This armor has been coated with an oily substance that makes you hard to grasp on to. While wearing this armor, you have advantage on skill checks to escape a grapple. Additionally, you may doff this armor as an action. This armor comes in variants for every armor type.

Slippery Toad Lens

Wondrous item, uncommon

This slightly sticky lens sits snugly over one eye and bears the engraved marking of a toad. As a bonus action, you may choose a creature within 100 feet that you can see and learn their current and maximum hit points.

Slumber Bomb

Wondrous item, uncommon

This perfectly spherical glass orb is filled with a violet mist that leaves liquid drops streaking on the inside of the glass. As an action, you may make a thrown attack against a target. If it hits, the target takes 1 piercing damage and must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. If they fail, they immediately fall unconscious as the pungent vapors overwhelm them. This effect lasts for one minute, if the sleeper takes damage, or someone uses an action to shake or slap the sleeper awake.

Solomon's Shamir

Wondrous item, very rare

Supposedly gifted to King Solomon of Israel by the demon lord Asmodeus, the Shamir is either a worm or living green stone with the power to disintegrate hard materials. Whether it be wood, stone, or metal, the presence of the Shamir will eat away at it. The Shamir must be kept in a lead box and wrapped in wool. Upon opening the box and facing the Shamir at a substance, the material will disintegrate at a rate of 5 square feet per minute. This process can be used delicately for precision work. The Shamir has no effect on living material. Once you have disintegrated 50 square feet of material, you cannot use the Shamir again until the next dawn.

Spear of the Formation

Weapon (spear), uncommon

While wielding this Athenian-made spear, you are able to control the battlefield more effectively while fighting in ranks. You may now use the Help action as a bonus action.

Spear of the Scribes

Weapon (spear), uncommon

The wisdom of the Egyptian scribes was consulted while this spear was forged. Their magic allowed this weapon to become a vessel for powerful sorcery as well as being a honed tool of violence. You may cast a spell with this spear as the target. When you do this, the spell is infused into the spear for 8 hours. When you hit a target with this spear, you may use your reaction to activate the spell with them as the target. Targets have disadvantage on saving throws against this magic and if it is a spell attack, it automatically hits. Only one spell can be stored in the spear at a time and once you have used this ability, you cannot use it again until the next dawn.

Spectral Circlet

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This intricately designed circlet is made of wrapped silver coiling around small turquoise gemstones. If you look closely, you can see wisps of smoke dancing within the jewels. As a reaction, you may project a spectral projection of yourself into a space 10 feet away from you. While projected in this way, you can take actions as if you were standing there. The spectral you can interact with the world but cannot be interacted with. If it would take any damage, it immediately fades and disappears. This projection lasts until the end of your next turn or until you choose to end the effect as a free action.

Sundering Pick

Weapon (war pick), uncommon

This hefty pick has an elongated sharp point that if wielded with enough brawn can hew the mightiest armor. This weapon gains the versatile property and its damage while wielded with two hands is 1d10. If you hit an attack against a target with AC 18 or higher, the target takes an additional 1d10 piercing damage.

Sword of Goujian

Weapon (shortsword), artifact (requires attunement)

This gleaming blade was forged over a thousand years ago by the legendary King Goujian of Yue. As a young prince Goujian's father was slain and he was taken prisoner by the neighboring king of Wu. During his years in humiliating servitude, he was forced to act as a footstool before the Wu king's great bronze throne. During these years he thought of nothing but revenge. In his arrogance Goujian's captor believed the young man a broken shell and released him back to his home kingdom in hopes of demoralizing the remaining defenders.

Finding his home in steep decline, Goujian immediately set to putting things right. Within ten years Yue was richer and more powerful than before its defeat. Turning his eyes north, Goujian moved to exact his revenge, quickly seizing and executing the crown prince of Wu before sieging the capital. His son dead and his pleas for surrender denied, the Wu king committed suicide. During the sack, Goujian had every surrendered Wu soldier executed to ensure none sought their own vengeance.



Looking to the throne he despised, he ordered it torn apart and melted down, transforming the former symbol of Wu rule into a powerful weapon. As part of the forging process, Goujian linked his own soul to the blade. In death, that connection remains.

The Sword of Goujian is a magic, sentient short sword that grants a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. It counts as a Sword of Sharpness.

Wisdom of Goujian. While carrying this sword you gain advantage on Wisdom saving throws and all skill checks related to Wisdom.

Biding Time. Whenever you use the ready action to make an attack you may immediately make one additional attack.

Never Forget. Anytime you use this weapon to deal damage to a target that has at any time in the past dealt damage to you, you deal an extra 4d6 slashing damage, these dice are not maximized by sharpness.

Sentience. The Sword of Goujian is a sentient Lawful Evil weapon with an Intelligence of 16, Wisdom of 18, and Charisma of 16. It has normal hearing and vision up to 60 feet. The weapon can read and speak all languages as though under the effects of a comprehend language spell. It can also communicate telepathically with the wielder.

Personality. While the blade will never compel you to overt evil acts, it will always encourage you to be ruthlessly pragmatic, to reward loyalty, to punish betrayal, and to never leave a loose end behind. The sword despises chaos and disorder and will vocally berate the user for such actions.

Destroying the Sword. To destroy the sword a chaotic good creature must cast wish while holding it at the site of the former Wu throne.

Sword of Mars

Weapon (longsword), legendary

Also known as the Sword of God, this weapon was wielded by Atilla the Hun, one of the greatest conquerors of all history. The tale goes that a simple farmer found this blade (having fallen from the sky) embedded in the flank of his cow and presented it to Atilla who took it as a sign that the gods proclaimed him ruler of the world. Supposedly, the sword was forged by the gods from a meteorite which gave it otherworldly power.

You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Alien Properties. The extraterrestrial nature of the blade itself gives it unique abilities unlike any other ever created. Attacks with this weapon override any creature's resistances, dealing damage as if they had none. As a bonus action, you can change the damage type of the sword to another. This change lasts for one hour. Once you have changed the damage type this way, you cannot do it again until you take a short or long rest.



The Aegis

Armor (shield), artifact (requires attunement)

Forged by the Cyclopes in Hephaestus' forge, the Aegis is a mighty shield that protects the wearer from harm and strikes terror into their enemies. The Aegis is wielded by Zeus and often given to Athena in battle. It bears the visage of the Gorgoneion, the head of Medusa. According to The Iliad, the Aegis produced a sound as from a myriad of roaring dragons. Golden tassels decorated the rim of the shield, each worth a hundred oxen. Power and terror come to the battlefield where the Aegis is wielded.

Protection of the Forge. While holding this shield, you have a +4 bonus to AC. This bonus is in addition to the shield's normal bonus to AC.

Hand of the Thunder God. While wielding the Aegis, as an action you can cast one of the following spells — Call Lightning, Thunderwave, and Lightning Bolt. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, with all charges restored at the dawn.

Gaze of the Gorgon. As an action, you may hold forth the Aegis and unleash the magnificent power within. All creatures within a 15-foot cone must make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw. If they fail, they are Petrified. If they succeed, they gain the frightened condition.



The Coat of Padarn Beisrudd

Wondrous item, uncommon

This magnificent red coat bears a draconic emblem. It is said that the coat will only fit those of noble birth and not those of lower class. While wearing the coat, if you are considered of noble birth among your people, the coat fits perfectly and those who look upon you can tell without a doubt the purity of your lineage. You gain advantage on Persuasion skill checks made while leveraging your status.

The Golden Fleece

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

As Phrixus, prince of Orchomenus, was about to be sacrificed due to the jealous rage of his stepmother Ino, he was saved by the winged golden ram, Chrysomallos. This savior was sent by the spirit of his mother, Nephele. Phrixus was delivered to Colchis and there sacrificed the ram to the gods as thanks for his life. He skinned the Golden Fleece from the ram and hung it from an oak tree in Ares' sacred grove. In Colchis, he befriended King Aeëtes and joined his family by marrying one of his daughters. The Golden Fleece was then guarded by a vicious dragon who never slept.

Some time later, the hero Jason and his companions, the Argonauts, landed on Colchis in search of the Golden Fleece. Jason's quest was to retrieve the Golden Fleece to assume the throne his uncle Pelias had stolen from his father. King Aeëtes assumed that Jason would attempt to usurp his own throne and gave him three impossible tasks to complete before attaining his prize. With the help of the sorceress Medea, the king's own daughter, Jason overcame these tasks and retrieved the Golden Fleece.

Rightful Heir. The holder of the Golden Fleece is known to all as the true ruler. While you hold the fleece, those around you know without a doubt that you belong in a position of authority.

Whether it be the leader of a small group or the monarch of a vast empire, those who see you with the fleece cannot question your claim. You must, however, have some natural claim to the authority you hold with the Golden Fleece. You may not enter a foreign land with the fleece and proclaim yourself king expecting the people to rally behind you.

Cult of Personality. While attuned to the Golden Fleece, you gain advantage on all Charisma skill and ability checks.

Object of Desire. While obtaining the Golden Fleece is a powerful boon, it comes at the steep price of knowing others will always want to take it from you. The Golden Fleece is so widely known and undisputed in its power of authority that adventurers from far and wide will go through momentous efforts to retrieve it.



The Golden Throne

Wondrous item, very rare

Hephaestus, god of the forge, was thrown from Mount Olympus by his cruel mother Hera when he was only an infant. As he aged and grew angry with her for this malicious act against a mere child, he devised a scheme of revenge. Hephaestus crafted a golden throne lavish enough to entice the queen of the gods and sent it to her as a gift. Gladly, she accepted and sat down without a second thought. Invisible chains grasped her body and restrained her in place. None in Mount Olympus could free her on to free his mother and it was only when Dionysus inebriated him that he agreed to free her.

The Golden Throne is made of solid gold and exquisitely detailed. Naturally, the material value of such an object is beyond comprehension. The curse of this throne still remains and any who sit in it will be trapped there. None may escape except by the hands of Hephaestus or the spell Wish.



The Spear of Lugh

Weapon (spear), legendary (requires attunement)

The Spear of Lugh, one of the Four Treasures of the Tuatha Dé Danann, was brought from the island city of Gorias to Ireland. Often mistaken for the fiery lance, Areadbhar, Lugh took this spear as recompense from an enemy. It is said that Lugh's spear is impossible to overcome and that when thrown, it will always hit its mark and return to its leather sheathe.

You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

This spear holds 4 magical charges that can be used to activate the following abilities.

Ibar. As a bonus action, you may consume a charge and speak the command word Ibar. Your next thrown attack with the spear is guaranteed to hit a target within 120 feet. When you throw the spear in this way upgrade the damage to 1d10.

Athibar. As a bonus action, you may consume a charge and speak the command word Athibar. The spear then returns to your hand as long as it is within 120 feet of you.

Regain 1d4 charges after a short rest and all charges after a long rest.

Thunderbolt of Zeus

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

The thunderbolt is the most iconic symbol of Zeus, father god of the Olympians. After freeing the Cyclopes from his father, Cronus, they gifted Zeus the thunderbolt which gave him command over the powerful force. The thunderbolt had originally been hidden away by Gaia, who was often at odds with Zeus due to him defeating her children, Echidna and Typhon.

Might of the Sky. As an action, you may throw the thunderbolt which has the same effects as casting the spell Lightning Bolt. You cannot use this ability again until you have recalled the thunderbolt.

Recall. As a bonus action, you may cause the thunderbolt to rematerialize in your hand.

Overload Shock. As a bonus action, you may summon all of the energy in the thunderbolt into an overcharged state. Then, as an action, you may throw the thunderbolt which has the same effects as casting the spell Chain Lightning. Once you have used this ability, you cannot use it again until the next dawn.

Thunderstick

Wondrous item, common

This 3-foot-long wooden cylinder appears rough and natural, as if it has been sitting in one place for a very long time. When the Thunderstick is shaken or turned upside down, a noise like distant rolling thunder emanates loud enough for creatures within 100 feet to hear.

Thysrus Staff

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

A thysrus staff is a branch of fennel wrapped in ivy and topped with a pinecone. It is typically associated with the Greek god Dionysus or the Roman god Bacchus. The thysrus staff is a symbol of hedonism and fertility. Those who wield the staff are loved by all and bring joy and merriment to the world around them.

While wielding this staff, you can use an action to cast the Charm Person or Animal Friendship spell with it (DC 15). Once you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you take a short or long rest.



Toe Rings of Comfort

Wondrous item, common

This set of 10 golden toe rings fit comfortably on the feet of any Medium sized creature. While wearing them, you never have to wear shoes, as the soles of your feet become tough as leather.

Tommlin's Shield of Vengeance

Armor (shield), uncommon

This bronze shield glimmers in the light and displays several red gemstones on its face. The wielder of this shield will notice the unusual lightness and grip of the object, making it an excellent tool for offense as well as defense. When you make an attack while holding the shield, you may choose to sacrifice the usual +2 bonus to AC you receive from the shield until the beginning of your next turn. When you do this, you gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made on this turn.



Torc of Cold Truth

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This beautiful golden necklace was crafted in Albion and feels unusually warm against the skin. When a creature intentionally lies or withholds information from you, the torc grows cold around your neck and alerts you.



Trident of Poseidon

Weapon (trident), artifact (requires attunement)

Poseidon is one of the Twelve Olympians and brother of Zeus and Hades. He is son of the titans Cronus and Rhea and god of the seas, storms, earthquakes, and horses. The trident he wields was forged by the Cyclopes and grants incredible mastery of Poseidon's domains.

You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Bursting Geyser. When you make a thrown attack with the trident, you may use your reaction to cause a spring of water to explode out of the ground under the space you are targeting. This spring takes up a 5-foot square and shoots upward 50 feet. Any creature caught in the spring must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or be swept up and tossed an additional 50 feet, falling from a height of 100 feet.

Unflinching Attunement. The trident can be wielded by no other than the one attuned. If another creature attempts to pick up the trident, it falls heavily to the floor and cannot be moved. Dispel Magic or anti-magic fields have no effect on this item.

Drought. While holding the trident in a body of water, you may cause the water to rapidly begin to dry up. Over the course of ten minutes, you may cause up to one mile of water to completely dry. After you have dried this much, you cannot use this ability again until the next dawn.

Olympian Spells. While wielding this trident, you may cast the cantrip Create or Destroy Water. You may also cast the spell Control Water a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus until requiring a long rest. You may cast the spell Earthquake once per week.

Vapors of Delphi

Wondrous item, very rare

Sourced from the sacred fumes of Delphi, this intricate glass bottle contains a swirling cloud of green and grey gases. Inlaid with gold adornments and a ruby topper, the bottle appears quite valuable. When held close to the ear, one can hear nondescript whispers emanating from the bottle.

Inhaling the contents of the bottle grants the user prophetic visions, giving them 1d4 hints about the day to come. They count as incapacitated for the next hour. The bottle has three uses before the gases are expended.



Veil of Mixed Signals

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This sheer veil hangs loosely over your face and distorts light passing through it, affecting your visage. When making a Persuasion or Intimidation check, you may substitute either skill for the other.

Ves' Vile Censer

Wondrous item, uncommon

While holding this censer, as a bonus action you may cause it to emanate a green haze that is toxic to inhale. Creatures that start their turn or enter the area within 10 feet of you for the first time on their turn take 2d6 poison damage. If a creature ends their turn within 10 feet of you, they must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain the poisoned condition. Creatures that are unable or do not need to breathe are immune to this damage. You are immune to the effects of the censer. The censer continues to emanate the gas for one minute or until you disable it as a bonus action.

Wand of Spicy

Wondrous item, common

Tricksters and deviants will devise all manner of schemes to prank others. Magically inclined individuals are no exception. This curved red wand makes your hand sweat while holding it. As an action, you can point the wand at a food or beverage within 30 feet and speak the magic word "Capcacio!" The meal in question is then infused with extremely spicy flavor, potentially ruining someone's lunch.

Water of Lethe

Wondrous item, very rare

Lethe is one of the five rivers of the Underworld — the river of forgetfulness. To drink the water of Lethe is to forget one's mortal life. Shades of the dead seeking reincarnation must first drink the water of Lethe to shed their past life.

If you imbibe at least 8 ounces of the water of Lethe, your memories rapidly fade. They can only be restored by the Greater Restoration or Wish spells.

Weapon of Sacrifice

Generic variant, weapon, uncommon

Weapons crafted using blood magic can often have dangerous side effects. The end results, however, may justify the means. When you deal damage with this weapon, you may spend 1 hit die and add that number to the damage dealt. This expends the hit die as if you had consumed it during a short rest.

Weights of the World

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

These ornate golden earrings are set with blue gems and weigh heavily on your ear lobes as you put them on. Very gradually, these earrings magically accustom your body to higher stresses of gravity and pressure. Once you have been attuned to these earrings for at least a week you gain the following ability. When you take the earrings off, you feel your body has grown incredibly light. Double your walking speed and jumping distance for one hour. Additionally, if you are capable of making multiple melee attacks in a single turn, increase the number of attacks you are able to make by one. Once you have used this ability, you must put on the earrings and wear them for an additional week before being able to use them again.

Whetstone of Tudwal Tudglyd

Wondrous item, rare

Tudwal Tudglyd, also known as Tutagual, was a king of Alt Clut and father of the famous Rhydderch Hael. He carried with him a magical stone which gave great power to brave warriors. It is said that only one with courage could sharpen his blade with this whetstone with cowards finding only dull iron.

During a short rest, you may use this whetstone to sharpen a bladed weapon. In your next combat, you must spend every action and movement with the intent of directly defeating your opponents. If you do so, you gain +1 on attack and damage rolls and include a roll of 19 as a critical hit. If you do not, or if you spend a turn out of combat, you instead have disadvantage on your next attack.

Whirlwind Flail

Weapon (flail), uncommon

The chain of this flail spins on a smoothly-lubricated axis. As a bonus action, you may begin to wind up the flail into a spinning tornado of death. When you make an attack with this weapon during this turn, you gain +1 on the attack roll and upgrade the damage die to 2d8.



Wine of Dependence

Wondrous item, uncommon

This drink is cursed; when you drink the wine, it drinks a bit of you. If a creature takes even a single sip from this bottle, they must make a DC 18 Charisma saving throw. If they fail, they become permanently addicted to alcohol and gain the poisoned condition when they have not had a drink in 8 hours. The spells Remove Curse and Greater Restoration can remove this effect.



Winged Sandals of Hermes

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

Also known as the Talaria of Mercury in Latin, these sandals have small wings at the ankles and gift the wearer the ability of flight. Hephaestus, greatest of all artisans and craftsman of the gods, made these for Hermes out of magical gold that never tarnishes.

While wearing and attuned to these sandals, you gain a permanent flying speed equal to double your walking speed. You are immune to falling damage and can take the dash action as a bonus action. Additionally, you may ignore the effects of the first three levels of exhaustion.



Yao Grass

Wondrous item, uncommon

There are two types of yao grass that grow in various mountain regions of China. One, when mixed with the proper ingredients, produces a powerful love potion. The other puts the imbiber into a state of perfect mental clarity.

Guyao Mountain. When this yellow flowered herb is mixed into a potion with a creature's hair, this potion will cause the imbiber to fall in love with the creature. They are under the effect of the charmed condition and can be freed by the spell Lesser Restoration.

Taishi Mountain. When this white flowered herb is mixed into a potion, it causes the imbiber to enter a state of mental clarity. Until your next long rest, you have advantage on Intelligence and Wisdom saving throws. However, this potion has a numbing effect giving you disadvantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws.



CHAPTER 5

CREATURES & ADVERSARIES

Aqrabuamelu

Large monstrosity, lawful neutral or chaotic evil

Originally created by Tiamat during the War of Chaos, the first Aqrabuamelu served as shock troops against the Igigi gods. Endowed with a portion of their creator's deadly venom, swarms of these fearsome scorpion-men brought many Igigi low before the Anunnaki were forced to intervene. With Marduk's victory over Tiamat, many of the forces of Chaos fled into hiding, but the fate of the remaining Aqrabuamelu fell to the Assembly of the Gods, with many of the Anunnaki—most notably Nergal—demanding that they be destroyed.

Shamash, god of light and brother of Nergal, impressed by the Aqrabuamelu's ferocity in battle and by their willingness to stand before the Assembly of the Gods, offered a proposal: if they swore to serve the Anunnaki and hunt down the remaining forces of Chaos, he would take personal responsibility for them and their lives would be spared. To this day, the gates of Kur are protected by the Aqrabuamelu, with a retinue of the scorpion-men serving Shamash directly in his never-ending crusade against the forces of Chaos.



Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 123 (13d10 + 52)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16	16	18	13	14	12
(+3)	(+3)	(+4)	(+1)	(+2)	(+1)

Skills Insight +5, Perception +5, Stealth +9

Senses Blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive

Perception 15

Languages Aramaic, Pahlawānig

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Actions

Multiattack The Aqrabuamelu makes three attacks, either with its claws or its longbow. It can replace one of those attacks with a sting attack.

Claw Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). The Aqrabuamelu has two claws, each of which can grapple only one target.

Longbow Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 11 (2d10) poison damage.

Sting Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 14 (2d10 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 33 (6d10) poison damage and becoming poisoned on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Follower of Bennu

Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger), neutral

In Heliopolis the Egyptian God Benu is worshiped as a symbol of creation and rebirth. His acolytes, known as the Followers of Benu, are devoted scholars of the Book of the Dead, and through powerful transformative rituals have uncovered the secrets of a uniquely strange form of immortality. So long as they remain dedicated servants of Benu, they receive his blessing, allowing the devoted to take the form of the great heron himself.

While flight alone would be a worthy gift for those acting as messenger and psychopomp to the dead, those gifted with Benu's blessing are said to be nearly impervious to death's cruel sting, their bodies erupting into flame and restoration after suffering a mortal blow.



Armor Class 12

Hit Points 31 (7d8)

Speed 30 ft. (fly 50 ft. in heron and hybrid forms)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10	15	11	13	15	14
(+0)	(+2)	(+0)	(+1)	(+2)	(+2)

Skills Insight +6, Perception +6, Religion +5,

Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 16

Perception 15

Languages Greek, Egyptian

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Renewed in Flame If a source of damage would bring the Follower of Benu to 0 hit points, they instead erupt into flame, returning to their maximum hit point value and dealing 10 (3d6) damage to all adjacent creatures. This ability can only be triggered once per long rest. If the remains of a Follower of Benu are ritually cremated within one week of their death, they are restored to life with 1 hit point.

Shapechanger The Follower of Benu can use its action to polymorph into a heron-humanoid hybrid or into a heron, or back into its human form. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its human form if it dies.

Actions

Multiattack (Human or Hybrid Form Only) The Follower of Benu makes two weapon attacks, one of which can be with its sling.

Beak (Heron or Hybrid Form Only) *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1d2 piercing damage in heron form, or 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage in hybrid form.

Shortsword (Human or Hybrid Form Only) *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Sling (Human or Hybrid Form Only) *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Conspirator

Medium humanoid, any alignment

Politics in the world of antiquity can be a dangerous game, with none understanding this truth better than the conspirators working to remove any and all opposition on their road to power. Though plotters and schemers can be found in every major city in the known world, the conspirators of Rome have elevated their craft to an artform, influencing policy and the fate of empires on the point of a knife.

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8+2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11	15	12	14	12	16
(+0)	(+2)	(+1)	(+2)	(+1)	(+)

Skills **Deception** +5, **Insight** +4, **Perception** +3,

Persuasion +5, **Sleight of Hand** +4, **Stealth** +4

Senses passive **Perception** 13

Languages Greek, Latin (or any two)

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Pack Tactics The conspirator has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the conspirator's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Surprise Attack If the conspirator surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 5 (2d4) damage from the attack.

Actions

Dagger *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Euryale

Medium monstrosity, lawful evil

An elder sister of Medusa, Euryale is a fierce gorgon that shares her late sister's curse. Though Medusa's murderer, Perseus, is long dead, she has spent much of her immortal life in mourning for the sister she failed to save. Euryale has a burning hatred for those who call themselves "heroes," turning them to stone and shattering them with her powerful voice at every opportunity.

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 200 (16d10 + 112)

Speed 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18	22	24	16	15	16
(+4)	(+6)	(+7)	(+3)	(+2)	(+3)

Skills **Deception** +6, **Insight** +5, **Perception** +5,

Stealth +9

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive **Perception** 15

Languages Greek, Egyptian, Latin

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Petrifying Gaze When a creature that can see Euryale's eyes starts its turn within 30 feet of Euryale, she can force it to make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw if Euryale isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is instantly petrified. Otherwise, a creature that fails the save begins to turn to stone and is restrained. The restrained creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn, becoming petrified on a failure or ending the effect on a success. The petrification lasts until the creature is freed by the greater restoration spell or other magic.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see Euryale until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature

looks at Euryale in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

If Euryale sees herself reflected on a polished surface within 30 feet of her and in an area of bright light, Euryale, due to her curse, is affected by her own gaze.

Actions

Cacophonous Screech (Recharge 5-6) Euryale emits a piercing cry. All creatures within 60 feet of Euryale must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, becoming deafened and taking 55 (10d10) thunder damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If a petrified creature is reduced to half their maximum hit points or less by this damage, they die as their stone body crumbles to dust.

Multiattack Euryale makes either three melee attacks—one with her snake hair and two with her short sword—or two ranged attacks with her longbow.

Snake Hair Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 9 (1d6 + 6) piercing damage plus 21 (6d6) poison damage.

Shortsword Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d6 + 6) piercing damage.

Longbow Ranged Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (1d8 + 6) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage.

Gallu

Medium fiend (demon), lawful evil

Native to the chthonic realm of Kur, the gallu demons are dutiful servants of Ereshkigal, most often employed in retrieving wayward souls that attempt to escape the underworld. The gallu have no need or desire to eat or drink in any conventional way, instead subsisting off of the raw fear of their prey. When called to combat, swarms of gallu demons descend en masse, taking hold of their foes and flying to a great height before dropping them to be crushed far below.

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d10+20)

Speed 20 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18	13	15	18	11	11
(+3)	(+1)	(+2)	(-1)	(+2)	(+0)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +4, Wis +4

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Aramaic, Pahlawānīg, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Fearsense The gallu can accurately detect the direction of frightened creatures from up to a mile away.

Magic Resistance The gallu has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack The gallu makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its talons.

Bite Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (2d4+3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned in this way, the target can't regain hit points. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Talons Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6+3) slashing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the gallu can't use its talons on another target.

Gegenees

Large giant, chaotic evil

A race of aggressively territorial six-armed giants native to Anatolia, the gegenees were famously challenged by the Greek hero Heracles during his expedition with the Argonauts. Despite proving worthy foes even for mighty Heracles, arrows tipped with the hydra's deadly venom were their undoing.

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 138 (12d12+60)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18	13	20	7	9	9
(+4)	(+1)	(+5)	(-2)	(-1)	(-1)

Skills Perception +2

Damage Vulnerabilities poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Aramaic, Greek

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Siege Monster The gegenees deals double damage to objects and structures.

Actions

Multiattack The gegenees makes six attacks divided between its fists and thrown rocks, or four attacks and one boulder crush.

Boulder Crush (Recharge 6) **Melee Weapon Attack:** +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 14 (3d6+4) bludgeoning damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure the target is unconscious for 1 minute. The unconscious target repeats the saving throw if it takes damage and at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Fist **Melee Weapon Attack:** +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d8+4) bludgeoning damage.

Rock Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6+4) bludgeoning damage.

Heron

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 2 (1d6-1)

Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3	13	8	2	13	7
(-4)	(+1)	(-1)	(-4)	(+1)	(-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages --

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Flyby The heron doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Keen Sight The heron has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Beak **Melee Weapon Attack:** +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1 (1d2) piercing damage.

The Gegenees are nearly extinct in large part due to their titanic conflict with the Argonauts, but those that remain have lost none of their fury. While these wandering few are most often found in the wild places of the world, some have been pressed into the service of greater powers, acting as living siege weapons in mortal wars. Their susceptibility to poisons is a weakness that can be cleverly exploited by those seeking to control them.

on is believed to guide lost of the dead to the underworld, forming the sacred duty of the psychopomp. For many spellcasters, worthy familiar, capable of performing the heron's given task by land, sea, or air.

Hieracosphinx

Large monstrosity, neutral evil

The hawk-headed hieracosphinx is a common sight within the maze-like tombs and mortuary complexes of Egypt. Like the powerful androsphinx and gnosphinx, the hieracosphinx most often serves as a guardian of sacred places. Though they lack the calculating intellect of their more celebrated cousins, hieracosphinxes are possessed of a certain cruel cunning, making excellent use of their innate magical talents to dispatch would-be trespassers with sadistic glee.

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 76 (8d12+24)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16	13	17	10	16	14
(+3)	(+1)	(+3)	(+0)	(+3)	(+2)

Skills Perception +5, Insight +5, Stealth +3

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities psychic

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Egyptian

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Inscrutable The hieracosphinx is immune to any effect that would sense its emotions or read its thoughts, as well as any divination spell that it refuses. Wisdom (Insight) checks made to ascertain the sphinx's intentions or sincerity have disadvantage.

Innate Spellcasting The hieracosphinx's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom(spell save DC 13). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

At will: bane, bestow curse

3/day each: darkness, mirror image, misty step, silent image

1/day: wall of force

Magic Weapons The hieracosphinx's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack The hieracosphinx makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its claws.

Beak *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d12+3) piercing damage.

Claws *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 14 (2d10+3) slashing damage.

The Hieracosphinx is an
ingly deadly foe for
mored. The most
remember is

Though going for a midnight ride at the mercy of a
Pica can hardly be recommended, local tales abound
of brave souls succeeding in saddling these creatures
for limited periods with the aid of iron spurs. Longer
arrangements could theoretically be made with the right
ilk, a bargain made with a Pica might have
its own repercussions...

Púca

Medium fey, chaotic neutral

The Púcai are an elusive race of mischievous tricksters native to Hibernia, but they have been known to travel great distances in search of new targets of their sometimes playful, sometimes pernicious schemes. Capable of taking the form of man or beast, a Púca will most often choose to appear before a lone traveler in the shape of a dark horse with glowing, golden eyes. Telepathic by nature, the Púca will promise to bring their intended victim swiftly to their destination, imploring them to climb onto their back before galloping away into the night. Those who survive such encounters are often left miles off course, abandoned by the Púca as its mocking laughter echoes in their heads.



Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 31 (7d6 + 7)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11	16	10	10	14	16
(+0)	(+3)	(+0)	(+0)	(+2)	(+3)

Skills Deception +6, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +4

Senses **Darkvision** 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages all, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Bite *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Change Shape The Púca magically polymorphs into a humanoid or beast that has a challenge rating equal to or less than its own, or back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing

or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the Púca's choice).

In a new form, the Púca retains its game statistics and ability to speak, but its AC, Strength, Dexterity, and movement modes are replaced by those of the new form, and it gains any statistics and capabilities (except class features, legendary actions, and lair actions) that the new form has but that it lacks.

Wild Ride When polymorphed into a rideable creature such as a horse, the Púca functions much the same as a mount of that type, but lacks a saddle unless one is provided. As a reaction while being ridden, the Púca may immediately move up to twice their movement speed. After the Púca moves in this way, the rider can no longer safely dismount until the Púca chooses to stop. Attempting to dismount while in motion requires a DC 18 Acrobatics Check, with a failure dealing 31 (8d6+3) bludgeoning damage and knocking the rider prone as they are trampled underfoot. On a success, the rider takes half damage and lands in a space of their choosing adjacent to the Púca.

Qilin

Large dragon, lawful good

A creature of good omen, the Qilin has been known throughout China since the days of the Yellow Emperor. Though exceedingly rare, the Qilin is said to appear before important events and auspicious births, seemingly capable of judging the fates of mortals and steering them towards benevolent outcomes. To those it deems worthy, a Qilin can prove a steadfast protector, even serving as a mount of unparalleled quality to a handful of legendary heroes. To those with nefarious intentions, however, the Qilin can be a truly terrifying foe, incinerating evil-doers with violent bursts of radiance and flame.

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 200 (16d10 + 112)

Speed 60 ft., fly 120 ft. swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26	20	24	18	22	24
(+8)	(+5)	(+7)	(+4)	(+6)	(+7)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened

Saving Throws Con +12, Wis +11, Cha +12

Skills Arcana +8, History +8, Insight +11, Perception +11, Stealth +5

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21

Languages understands all, but can't speak

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Amphibious The Qilin can breathe air and water.

Innate Spellcasting The Qilin's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20). The Qilin can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: detect evil and good, detect thoughts, purify food and drink

3/day each: flame strike, hallow, sunbeam, telekinesis

1/day each: control weather, foresight, sunburst



Untraceable The Qilin leaves no footprints, nor any sign of its passing even as it treads on fresh grass or snow. Divination magic used to ascertain its location or that of its rider automatically fails.

Magic Weapons The Qilin's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack The Qilin makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its hooves.

Bite *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 19 (2d10 + 8) piercing damage.

Hooves *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d6 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

Impale If the Qilin moves at least 30 feet in a straight line toward a target it may make a special *Melee Weapon Attack* with a +12 to hit and a reach of 10 ft. On a successful hit, the target is impaled, taking 41 (6d10+8) piercing damage. If the target is a medium or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 18). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the Qilin cannot impale another target.

Radiant Breath (Recharge 5–6) The Qilin exhales radiant energy in a 90-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 66 (12d10) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Scorzak

Medium fiend (devil), lawful neutral

Once a powerful warlord, the cursed entity known as Scorzak brought fear and ruin to his enemies during his mortal life. Seeking immortality, Scorzak marched his armies into the underworld itself. Just as Achilles before him, Scorzak immersed himself in the river Styx, becoming invulnerable to the blows of all mortal weapons. Pluto and his host of the dead were no mere mortals, however, and as Scorzak challenged the god of death for dominion over Tartarus, he finally met his match. As the dead lay waste to his armies and Pluto himself humbled the nigh-invincible warrior, Scorzak finally understood the nature of hubris.

Dragged through Phlegethon, the River of Fire, Scorzak's body was filled with an inferno that set his very soul alight. Despite his torment, death would not come for Scorzak. Immortality he had sought, and so immortality he was granted: for the Olympians decreed that as punishment for his pride, Scorzak would not die until he had repaid his crimes in service to the gods. Now he travels the world carrying out their will. He is messenger, herald, hand, and justice, ever-burning and never tiring as he yearns for final release.

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 297 (17d20 + 119)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26	15	22	16	16	20
(+8)	(+2)	(+6)	(+3)	(+3)	(+5)

Saving Throws Str +14, Con +12, Wis +9, Cha +11

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darksight 120 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Egyptian, Greek

Challenge 19 (22,000 XP)



Magic Weapons Scorzak's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Horn of Hades As an action, Scorzak's runic horn emits a keening howl, dealing 27 (6d8) thunder damage to all creatures within 120 feet and stunning them for one round. After using this ability, Scorzak must take a long rest before using it again.

Multiattack Scorzak makes three attacks, two with his longsword and one with his whip.

Longsword Melee Weapon Attack: +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 21 (3d8 + 8) slashing damage plus 13 (3d8) fire damage.

Whip Melee Weapon Attack: +14 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d6 + 8) slashing damage plus 10 (3d6) fire damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be pulled up to 25 feet toward Scorzak.

Legendary Actions

Scorzak can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Scorzak regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Longsword Scorzak makes one longsword attack.

Teleport (Costs 2 Actions) Scorzak magically teleports, along with any equipment he is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space he can see.

Burning Hands (Costs 3 Actions) Scorzak casts the spell Burning Hands at fourth level. (Spell Save DC 19)

Tribal Warrior

Medium humanoid, chaotic neutral

Though dubbed barbarians by their would-be conquerors, the proud warrior traditions of the Celtic and Germanic tribes remain strong in the wild places of the world. Often resistant or outright hostile to foreign influence, these fierce tribesmen rarely bother to learn the languages of their enemies, believing that true understanding can only be found on the battlefield.

Armor Class 15 (hide armor)

Hit Points 27 (5d8+5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17	16	13	9	12	12
(+3)	(+3)	(+1)	(-1)	(+1)	(+1)

Skills Stealth +6, Survival +3

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Any Celtic or Germanic

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Cunning Action On each of its turns, the tribal warrior can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Final Fury When reduced to one half of its maximum hit points the tribal warrior may make one additional greataxe or javelin attack when it takes the multiattack action on each of its turns.

Surprise Attack If the tribal warrior surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack.

Actions

Multiattack The tribal warrior makes two attacks: two with its greataxe or one with its greataxe and one with its javelin.

Greataxe Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d12+3) piercing damage.

Javelin Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage.

Shahmaran

Medium monstrosity, chaotic good

The Shahmaran is an exceedingly rare creature that typically dwells within hidden desert oases, grottos, and caves. A recluse by necessity, the Shahmaran was nearly hunted to extinction in centuries past for its remarkable flesh, which is said to restore even the most ill or injured to good health. Benevolent by nature, the Shahmaran enjoys the company of like-minded individuals, and can be persuaded to part with a small portion of its healing blood, though trust can be a difficult thing to foster in such an understandably wary soul.

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 172 (15d12 + 75)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18	17	20	16	15	16
(+4)	(+3)	(+5)	(+3)	(+2)	(+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +8, Wis +5, Cha +6

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Aramaic, Pahlawānig

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Flesh of Restoration The flesh and blood of the Shahmaran have remarkable healing properties when prepared by a skilled alchemist. Whether given freely or harvested from a deceased Shahmaran, only one potion can be produced, as it takes a full year for the magical properties to return to a living Shahmaran. Preparing the potion requires a DC 18 Intelligence check using Alchemist's supplies. On a success, the resulting brew functions as a potion of supreme healing that also cures all diseases and negative conditions when consumed. On a failure, it instead becomes a potion of poison that cannot be detected by an identify spell.



Spellcasting The Shahmaran is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks), and it needs only verbal components to cast its spells. It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): mage hand, minor illusion, poison spray

1st level (4 slots): charm person, color spray, sleep

2nd level (3 slots): detect thoughts, hold person

3rd level (3 slots): revivify, water breathing

4th level (3 slots): hallucinatory terrain, wall of fire

5th level (2 slots): dominate person

Actions

Bite *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 31 (7d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Spawn of Tiamat

Large aberration (shapechanger), chaotic evil

Tiamat's myriad chaotic offspring are known to take many forms, but the most cunning among them are capable of hiding in plain sight, masquerading as mortal men and women as they work to undermine the forces of good and order. Ever mercurial, these devious shapeshifters make themselves at home in small villages and bustling cities, killing and supplanting the role of a chosen figure in order to wriggle their way into positions of power most suited to their schemes. Rarely content simply to survive as parasites in their stolen lives, Tiamat's restless offspring relish in the revelatory moment of their discovery, pushing the envelope of their cover in increasingly brazen ways to elicit the bedlam they crave.



"Artemis"

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 110 (13d10+39)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20	15	18	12	10	14
(+5)	(+2)	(+4)	(+1)	(+0)	(+2)

Skills Deception +5, Perception +3, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Aramaic, Pahlawānig

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Shapechanger The spawn of tiamat can use its action to polymorph into a Small or Medium beast or humanoid, or back into its true form. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Regeneration The spawn of Tiamat regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

Actions

Multiattack The spawn of Tiamat makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its tentacles.

Bite *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d6+5) piercing damage.

Tentacle *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (1d10+5) bludgeoning damage plus 4 (1d8) piercing damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 15) and restrained until the grapple ends. The spawn of Tiamat has two tentacles, each of which can grapple one target.

Tentacle Slam The spawn of Tiamat slams creatures grappled by it into each other or a solid surface. Each creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 14 (2d8+5) bludgeoning damage and be stunned until the end of the spawn of Tiamat's next turn. On a successful save, the target takes half the bludgeoning damage and isn't stunned.

“Artemis” The God Killer

Though few would ever seek to question a god, let alone challenge one, there are those in the world who seek to prove themselves against the deities. Weather for glory or freedom, those who do so rarely live long enough to have their names remembered. One exception is the so called “Artemis” The God Killer. This savage creature challenged and slew the Greco-Roman god Hyas in single combat. The Goddess Artemis, a close companion of Hyas, vowed to hunt the creature to the ends of the earth. Mockingly, it took her name to goad her further.

Though he remains at large, Artemis has taken it upon herself to hunt him down before he can slay another deity and shake the mortals’ faith in their masters.

Udug

Large fiend (demon), lawful evil or chaotic evil (Udug Hul)

Powerful demons of shadow, the hulking Udug absorb all light they touch, leaving an empty darkness in their wake. Few have seen their true forms, though they are exceedingly tall and their vicious claws drip with venom. Dwelling primarily in the underworld, the Udug relish any opportunity to feed on the light of the surface, though they can only absorb so much before becoming lethargic and retreating to the cold darkness of their home.

Despite their appearance, most Udug aren’t naturally aggressive, and will respond favorably to those that do not attack or flee at the sight of them. Deviants do exist among them, however; most notably the Udug Hul. These shadow predators are thankfully rare, but exceedingly dangerous. Capable of melding with the shadow of an unsuspecting victim, the Udug Hul can stalk prospective prey for hours before striking at the perfect moment and disappearing into the underworld.

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 160 (13d12 + 76)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20	15	21	19	17	16
(+5)	(+2)	(+5)	(+4)	(+3)	(+3)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +9, Wis +7, Cha +7

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Light Eater A 10 foot by 10 foot veil of shadow fills the space occupied by the Udug at all times, functioning as the Darkness spell. While in direct sunlight or a magical light source the Udug is empowered as it absorbs and consumes the light’s energy, doubling its movement speed and granting it an extra action and bonus action. After three consecutive rounds of light exposure the Udug becomes sated, ending the effects of Light Eater

and becoming stunned for one round. Continued light exposure now halves the Udug’s movement speed and it cannot consume light again until after a short rest.

Actions

Multiattack The Udug makes four claw attacks.

Claw Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (2d10 + 5) slashing damage and the target must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 27 (5d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Shadow Stalker As an action the Udug can meld with a shadow within 5 feet, becoming intangible as it enters the Ethereal Plane. The Udug conforms to the shape of the shadow it inhabits, and the shadow becomes noticeably darker (detected with a DC 17 Perception check). The Udug remains aware of its surroundings on the Material Plane and can emerge from the shadow as a reaction. If the shadow is attached to a creature, the Udug may emerge in an adjacent space to the creature and make one attack. If a source of light would cause the melded shadow to disappear, the Udug is forcefully returned to the Material Plane, becoming stunned for one round. Once the Udug has returned to the Material Plane it cannot meld with another shadow until after a long rest.

AGE OF ANTIQUITY



Class & Level

Background

Player Name

Character Name

Race

Alignment

Experience Points

AGE OF ANTIQUITY



Strength

Inspiration



Dexterity

Proficiency Bonus



Constitution

- ☐ Strength
- ☐ Dexterity
- ☐ Constitution
- ☐ Intelligence
- ☐ Wisdom
- ☐ Charisma



Intelligence

- ☐ Acrobatics
- ☐ Animal Handling
- ☐ Arcana
- ☐ Athletics
- ☐ Deception
- ☐ History
- ☐ Insight
- ☐ Intimidation
- ☐ Investigation
- ☐ Medicine
- ☐ Nature
- ☐ Perception
- ☐ Performance
- ☐ Persuasion
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Slight of Hand
- ☐ Stealth
- ☐ Survival



Wisdom



Charisma

Skills

Armor Class			Initiative			Speed		
Current Hit Points								
Temporary Hit Points								
Total			Successes			Failures		
Hit Dice			Death Saves					

Personality Traits	
Ideals	
Bonds	
Flaws	

Name	Bonus	Damage/Type

Attacks and Spellcasting

Proficiencies and Languages

Equipment

Features and Traits

AGE OF ANTIQUITY



Class & Level

Background

Player Name

Character Name

Race

Alignment

Experience Points

AGE OF ANTIQUITY



Strength

Inspiration



Dexterity

Proficiency Bonus



Constitution



Intelligence



Wisdom



Charisma

- ☐ Strength
- ☐ Dexterity
- ☐ Constitution
- ☐ Intelligence
- ☐ Wisdom
- ☐ Charisma

- ☐ Acrobatics
- ☐ Animal Handling
- ☐ Areana
- ☐ Athletics
- ☐ Deception
- ☐ History
- ☐ Insight
- ☐ Intimidation
- ☐ Investigation
- ☐ Medicine
- ☐ Nature
- ☐ Perception
- ☐ Performance
- ☐ Persuasion
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Slight of Hand
- ☐ Stealth
- ☐ Survival

Skills

Armor Class	Initiative	Speed
Current Hit Points		
Temporary Hit Points		
Total	Successes	Failures
Hit Dice	Death Saves	

Personality Traits
Ideals
Bonds
Flaws

Name	Bonus	Damage/Type

Attacks and Spellcasting

Proficiencies and Languages

Equipment

Features and Traits

AGE OF ANTIQUITY





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